

HIP HOP 1995: SPECIAL YEAR-END DOUBLE ISSUE

VIBE

DEF JAM'S
FIRST
DECADE

ANDRE
HARRELL:
UPTOWN
TO
MOTOWN

R. KELLY'S
NEW ALBUM

THE INFAMOUS
QUEENSBRIDGE:
MC CAPITAL OF
THE WORLD

THE BAY AREA
BLOWS UP

JUNIOR M.A.F.I.A.,
Q-TIP, AND
DAS EFX
BUNDLE UP

WHITNEY

SITTING PRETTY AND STANDING BY HER MAN



\$ 2.50 DEC. 1995/JAN. 1996
DISPLAY UNTIL JANUARY 8





1. Follow instructions on the other side

Back

GbsSlipBack-001B



Back

1. Follow instructions on the other side

1. Open the foldout page
2. Insert this sheet with
 1. Front side touching the foldout page
 2. Arrow pointing to the fold
 3. Slip-sheet
 4. Free end
3. Slice the folded edge
4. Close the page

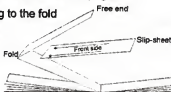
Foldout slip-sheet

GbsSlipSheet-001



Foldout slip-sheet

1. Open the foldout page
2. Insert this sheet with
 1. Front side touching the foldout page
 2. Arrow pointing to the fold
3. Slice the folded edge
4. Close the page







CK
Calvin Klein Jeans



This One



JU8J-TSJ-GK77



TOMMY



HILFIGER

tommy

the new american fragrance





JUST THE MAN • JUST THE MOVES • JUST THE MUSIC • JUST FOR HBO

MICHAEL
JACKSON
KING OF POP
ONE NIGHT ONLY

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10 8:00 PM ET/PT ONLY ON **HBO**

A PERSONAL CONCERT FROM NEW YORK CITY'S HISTORIC BEACON THEATER

©1995 Home Box Office, a division of Time Warner Entertainment Company, L.P. All rights reserved. HBO is a registered service mark of Time Warner Entertainment Company, L.P.





IN THE UTERUS
OF LOVE
WE ARE ALL
BLIND
CAVEFISH



JOOP! JEANS
JUST A THOUGHT.

ALLURE DETOUR MARIO'S PATRICIA FIELDS RICCARDI VALERO

FEVER IN THE FUNKHOUSE.

QUINCY JONES

JOOK JOINT

's

FEATURING GUEST ARTISTS:

ASHFORD & SIMPSON, PATTI AUSTIN, BABYFACE, BONO,
BRANDY, NAOMI CAMPBELL, CHAKA KHAN, RAY CHARLES,
PHIL COLLINS, COOLIO, GLORIA ESTEFAN, RACHELLE FERRELL,
BRANDON FIELDS, FUNKMASTER FLEX, SIEDAH GARRETT,
AARON HALL, HERBIE HANCOCK, HEAVY D, JERRY HEY,
RON ISLEY R. KELLY, MID CAPRI, HUBERT LAWS, LUNIZ,
BRIAN MCKNIGHT, MELLE MEL, JAMES MOODY, MR. X,
WILLIE "COGNAC" NORWOOD'S UNITED CHILDREN'S CHOIR,
SHAQUILLE O'NEAL, GREG PHILLINGANES, PORTRAIT,
QUEEN LATIFAH, JOSHUA REDMAN, STYLE, SWX TAKE 6,
TAMIA, ROD TEMPERTON, TOOTS THIELEMANS,
MICHAEL THOMPSON, TÖNE LÖC, MERVYN WARREN,
KIRK WHALUM, NANCY WILSON, BARRY WHITE,
WARREN WIEBE, CHARLIE WILSON, STEVIE WONDER,
YES/NO PRODUCTIONS (THE STOMP CAST), YO-YO.



©1995 Quest Records



Quest Records and Quest Artists appear courtesy of Quest Records. Babyface appears courtesy of Atlantic Records. Bono appears courtesy of Warner Bros. Records Inc. Brandon Fields appears courtesy of Island Records Ltd. (ABC). Chaka Khan appears courtesy of Warner Bros. Records Inc. Coolio appears courtesy of Jive Records. Diddy appears courtesy of Arista Records. Herbie Hancock appears courtesy of Warner Bros. Records. James Moody appears courtesy of Blue Note Records. Kirk Whalum appears courtesy of Blue Note Records. Quincy Jones appears courtesy of A&M Records. Ray Charles appears courtesy of Atlantic Records. Rick Warren appears courtesy of RCA Records. Stevie Wonder appears courtesy of Epic Records. Tamia appears courtesy of Jive Records. Toots Thielemans appears courtesy of Epic Records. Töne Loc appears courtesy of Epic Records. Yes/No Productions appears courtesy of Epic Records. Yo-Yo appears courtesy of Epic Records. Quest Records and Quest Artists appear courtesy of Quest Records. Babyface appears courtesy of Atlantic Records. Bono appears courtesy of Warner Bros. Records Inc. Brandon Fields appears courtesy of Island Records Ltd. (ABC). Chaka Khan appears courtesy of Warner Bros. Records Inc. Coolio appears courtesy of Jive Records. Diddy appears courtesy of Arista Records. Herbie Hancock appears courtesy of Warner Bros. Records. James Moody appears courtesy of Blue Note Records. Kirk Whalum appears courtesy of Blue Note Records. Quincy Jones appears courtesy of A&M Records. Ray Charles appears courtesy of Atlantic Records. Rick Warren appears courtesy of RCA Records. Stevie Wonder appears courtesy of Epic Records. Tamia appears courtesy of Jive Records. Toots Thielemans appears courtesy of Epic Records. Töne Loc appears courtesy of Epic Records. Yes/No Productions appears courtesy of Epic Records. Yo-Yo appears courtesy of Epic Records.

GO BEYOND THE LIMITS
OF YOUTH WHERE
THE ENERGY TAKES YOU
A STEP FURTHER.

GO TO WHERE STYLE IS
A WAY OF LIFE.

GO WEAR THE CLOTHES
THAT BRING
TOGETHER THE ENERGY
AND STYLE OF THE
CONTEMPORARY MAN.

GO RIGÖ.

RIGÖ
SPORT

AVAILABLE AT DAYTON'S HUDSON'S/MARSHALL FIELDS, FOR OTHER FINE RETAILERS
PLEASE CALL 1 800 394 7440



A good pair...

Leigh Taylor-Young, actress
Picket Fences

Dave Mason, musician
Fleetwood Mac



© 1995 Jordache Enterprises, Inc. Photos: Moran Quale

makes great things happen.

jeans
JORDACHE®
Starlight Foundation®
International

Starlight Foundation International provides entertainment, educational and wish granting services to critically, chronically and terminally ill children. Together, we can make a difference. To make a donation or for more information, call (310) 207-3558. Jordache Enterprises Inc. has made a \$20,000 contribution to Starlight combined with six months of print media exposure starting July 15, 1995.

THE BROADWAY

EMPORIUM CAPWELL

WEINSTOCK'S

BURDINES

STERN'S

A man and a woman are smiling and embracing each other, wearing a large red Santa Claus suit with a white fur collar. They are positioned inside the white fur trim of the suit, which is set against a green background.

Holiday pleasure!



**SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Quitting Smoking
Now Greatly Reduces Serious Risks to Your Health.**

© Lorillard 1996.
Kings: 17 mg. "tar," 1.2 mg. nicotine
av. per cigarette by FTC Method.

FEATURES

DECEMBER 1995/JANUARY 1996 • VOLUME 3, NUMBER 10

78 WHOLLY WHITNEY!

With God as her witness, MRS. BOBBY BROWN testifies about her new movie, her ol' man, and her true voice. *By Daryel Smith. Photographs by Sante D'Orazio*

HIP HOP '95

THE BIG WILLIES

86 WHAT A RUSH

DefJam cofounder and president RUSSELL SIMMONS celebrates the label's 10th anniversary with an eye to the future—and an ear on the phone. The man who transformed hip hop rushes down memory lane.

By Cheo H. Coker. Photographs by Larry Fink

92 BOE BAY

When ANDRE HARRELLE announced he was taking over Motown Records, it confirmed a rumor *everyone* already seemed to know, but left one huge question unanswered: Can the former Uptown president lead the fabled label into the 21st century?

By Anthony DeCurtis. Photographs by Dana Lixenberg

98 THE YEAR IN HIP HOP

TUPAC's sentencing, EAZY-E's death, and the reemergence of East Coast hip hop loomed large in the nine-pound. *By Josh Tyrangiel*

THE SCENES

100 BRIDGE OVER TROUBLED WATER

Are New York's Queensbridge Housing Projects—home of stars from MARLEY MARL to MOBB DEEP—a hip hop promised land, or a land of broken promises? *By Sacha Jenkins.*

Photographs by Andrew Williams

106 BAY WATCH

East vs. West rivalry takes on new meaning in Northern Cali as the San Francisco-Oakland scene blows up on both sides of the Bay. *By Jason Fine*

114 CLIP: MICHAEL RAPAPORT

This true romantic takes a star turn in *Mighty Aphrodite*. *By Daryel Smith. Photograph by Barron Claiborne*

116 BEL RIO OF DREAMS

How VANESSA "THE UNDRESSA" DEL RIO made the tricky transition from adult film diva to woman in love. *By Bob Morales. Photographs by Christian Witkin*

124 CLIP: MUKENSTEF

Sista Friends. *By Deborah Gregory. Photograph by Zulena Jacome*

COVER

Photographed by Sante D'Orazio; styling by Estée Ochoa; hair by Elin La Var/La Var Hair Design; makeup by Juliette for Style Architect; wool grograin bra top by Marc Jacobs; black velvet hipsters by Gucci

ABOVE

Tip photographed by Daniel Hastings/Carter; styling by Emil Wilbekin; Indy Interchange's coat and suspender jeans both by Columbia Sportswear; brown fleece hooded pullover by Phat Farm; brown way leather work boots by Nunn Bush; goggles by Oakley

SAMSUNG

simply healthy. vegetables cooked in a microwave retain more vitamins than with any other





form of cooking, available in compact, mid, and full sizes.

enjoy. 1800 so simple. simply samsung.



FASHION

108 COLD CHILLIN'

Q-Tip, Junior M.A.F.I.A., and Das EFX keep it real warm on New York's cold streets with fly snowboard and ski gear. Styling by Emil Wilbekin. Photographs by Daniel Hastings/Cartel

118 VIBE STYLE: OBJECTS OF DESIRE

Coveted clothes and accessories from world-class designers. Styling by Derick Procope. Photographs by Mark Mattock

DEPARTMENTS

34 CONTRIBUTORS

41 MAIL

49 START

The Ghetto. By Kevin Powell
Plus: Snaps, the cottage industry. Mariah Carey's genius. Chuck D, media baron. Bill Clinton throws down the funk.
• 52 ASK THE RAP BANDIT. • 56 SOUND CHECK: Rackwon. By Bobbito Garcia
• 57 IN THE MIX. • 60 BLACK-OWNED: Alexa Birdsong, jazz impresario. By Greg Tate

63 GET UP ON IT

The best affirmative action? Your vote. By Farai Chideya
Representative Maxine Waters: Making a difference. By Naadua Blankson-Seck

69 NEXT

SOCIETY OF SOUL's weeded funk.
RBX goes A.W.O.L.
PURE SOUL perfect the formula.
BEENIE MAN slams the charts.

129 LOOK

Actress Lauren Velez. By Deborah Gregory
• 130 SHOOT: Jamecia. TEN YEARS LATER: Kool G Rap.
• 131 SCENT: Men's fragrances. ACTRESS: Jennifer Lopez.
WORD: *Between God and Gangsta Rap. That's Blaxploitation!*
• 132 PRODUCT: Perfect presents.
• 134 WORD: *A Musical Feast. Vivid. CD-ROM: Burn:Cycle.*
GEAR: Wu-Wear.

137 REVOLUTIONS

R. KELLY. By Michael Eric Dyson
• Plus: The Jackson 5. Ben Harper. Lordz of Brooklyn. Oleta Adams.
8-Off. Shai. Will Downing. Mic Geronimo. *Dead Presidents* soundtrack.
Diana Ross. The Pharcyde. WC & the Maad Circle. Barrio Boyzz.
Sweet Honey in the Rock. Tracy Chapman. Veronica. Mystikal.
Jackie Mittoo. Terry Ellis. Al Green. *Rebirth of Cool 3*.
• 144 THE REAL MUSIC. By Greg Tate
• 147 BOOM SHOTS. By Rob Kenner
• 152 NOTES FROM THE UNDERGROUND. By Mimi Valdes
• 153 20 QUESTIONS.
• 154 SINGLE FILE. By James Hunter

166 PROPS

Kwanzaa. By Henry Hamble



VIBE's World Wide Web site
<http://www.vibe.com>
Check out these special sectionals!

Get Up On It

The interactive edition of VIBE's political awareness campaign.

Dole-A-Might...

Commentary and analysis of artistic freedom and the First Amendment in the aftermath of Bob Dole's now-famous speech.

Mammoth Music Meta-List

The most complete listing of music resources on the Net.

ABOVE

Vanessa del Rio photographed by Christian Witkin





IN THE COAST GUARD

THERE'S ONLY ONE

RESTRICTION FOR WOMEN














In the U.S. Coast Guard, opportunities are as vast as the ocean itself. Exciting jobs like rescue missions, protecting the environment, and law enforcement are all open to women. And since the Coast Guard is the smallest of the Armed Forces, your efforts are rewarded quickly. For more information, call 1-800-424-8883, Ext.1421 or fill out this panel and mail it in. And let the Coast Guard open doors for you. Most doors, anyhow.

Mail to: U.S. Coast Guard Information Center, 14180 Dallas Pkwy., Suite 326, Dallas, TX 75240-9795.

Name _____
 Address _____
 City/State/ZIP _____
 Phone _____ Date of Birth _____
☐ H.S. Grad. ☐ 2 Yr. ☐ 4 Yr. College Grad.
☐ Other _____ 1421



U.S. COAST GUARD. BE PART OF THE ACTION.

IT'S GOT TO BE SMOOTH

Michael Speaks

When Michael speaks, you listen. But when Michael sings, you can't help but move. His debut album, *No Equal*, on EastWest Records, combines thick soul ballads with a seven-octave range, and a bit of Sunday morning service. Before he connected with Mecca Don producers Roget Romain and Max Grouse, he sang on the street by day and in New York clubs by night. More powerful than Speaks' experiences on the streets is what he got from it. During a break from the video shoot for his upcoming release, "I Specialize," Michael talked about his power move from street singer to street angel.

How did you get started singing on the subway?

I came to New York about two years ago solely to get discovered. Walking around Times Square trying to get familiar with the city, I saw these guys dancing on the corner. They had buckets full of money. I thought, Whoa! So I went to 34th Street and started singing. The next thing I know, people are stopping and dropping money. I would make \$50 to \$60 every 20 to 30 minutes. One day when I was singing in Penn Station, Roget was walking by when I hit a real high note. He turned around and said, "You need to be on wax." He wouldn't make any promises, but he said that if I did what he said, he would get me a record deal. I sang for Gasoline Alley, Motown, and EastWest. Then the bidding was started, the fun part. The greatest thing in the world is people fighting over you with money.

How long were you singing on the street before Roget found you?

A couple of months.

So it wasn't long?

It was long enough.

What was going on in your mind when you were singing on the street?

I knew it was going to happen. I knew I had to be in the right place, New York, and get into the right place, because at night I would sing in the clubs. I had a lot of famous people coming to hear me sing before I got signed. They would say if you're not singing we're leaving.

You can hear the confidence in your overall persona. Do you think it helps?

It takes your presentation and your performance to another level. You have that confidence behind you. I knew that God blessed me with a gift. Once someone heard that gift, they would acknowledge it and do the right thing.

Tell me about the Whatever You Need Foundation.

When I was singing in the train station, I saw an abundance of homeless people all over the place. So, when I wrote the song, *Whatever You Need*, I started the *Whatever You Need* Foundation. The proceeds from the single will feed the hungry and the homeless. One day when I'm gold and platinum, my manager and I are going to feed a lot of people. That way I'll know the money is going where it is supposed to go.

Your brief contact with homelessness must have made quite an impression on you.

Most definitely. It was incredible. I really love helping people that help themselves. That is where I put my energies. I want to make room for other people that I know are very talented. They could easily take the place of these people who have deals who really shouldn't have them. I just want to help people, share my gift with the world.

How do you like performing on the road?

I've been on tour with Mary J. [Blige] for a month and a half. I've been getting real good reception from the crowd. It's been lovely. I love performing.

SEAGRAM'S GIN
The Smooth Gin In The Bumpy Bottle

Those who appreciate quality, enjoy it responsibly.

SMOOTH TALK WITH

Michael
Speaks



IT'S GOT TO BE
SMOOTH



Seagram's Extra Dry Gin

Distilled extra dry gin extra dry because of
Seagram's exclusive and original mellowing process

DISTILLED BY
Joseph E. Seagram & Sons

LAWRENCEBURG, IND.
750 ML • ALC. 40% BY VOL. (80 PROOF)

IN THE ANCIENT BOTTLE

100% NEUTRAL SPIRITS DISTILLED FROM

THE SMOOTH GIFT IN THE BUMPY BOTTLE.

Those who appreciate quality
enjoy it responsibly.

ALL THAT PAIR AND OF JEANS



PHOTOGRAPHY BY TIM ALEXANDER

MAKE-UP AKI GARY

AVAILABLE IN STORES EVERYWHERE

POSITIVE WEAR[®]

DR. JAYS-NY

PLANET EARTH- BRONX, NY

HOUSE OF NUBIAN- VILLAGE, NY

GASOLINE STOP- LONG ISLAND, NY

MR. SPORTY- JAMAICA, NY

SPIKES JOINT WEST, CA

BASS HIT- NORRISTOWN, PA

YOUNIQUE BOUTIQUE, TX

U.S. MEN FASHIONS- CHICAGO, IL

SAM'S GENERAL- NASHVILLE, TN

FOREVER

(310) 672-7192

3734 WEST CENTURY BLVD, UNIT #1, INGLEWOOD, CA 90303

M A R I A H C A R E Y

DAYDREAM
THE NEW ALBUM

FEATURING FANTASY AND ONE SWEET DAY (MARIAH CAREY & BOYZ II MEN).

PRODUCED BY WALTER AFANADOR, MARIAH CAREY, DAVE "JAM" HALL FOR UNTOUCHABLES ENTERTAINMENT, JERMAINE DUPRI (CO-PRODUCED BY MANUEL SEAU FOR SO SO DEF PRODUCTIONS), AND DAVID MICHAELS FOR DEF MIX PRODUCTIONS. REMIXES FOR FANTASY BY SEAN "PUFFY" COMBS (FEATURING O.D.B.). BOYZ II MEN APPEAR COURTESY OF MOTOWN RECORD COMPANY, L.P.

ON COLUMBIA CDs, CASSETTES & MINISERIES.
LOOK FOR THE MARIAH CAREY MUSIC SCENE™.

Only certain soundtracks, "Fantasy" and "One Sweet Day" are for sale only at participating locations. © 1997 Columbia Records. All rights reserved. "Fantasy" and "One Sweet Day" are trademarks of Columbia Records. "Fantasy" and "One Sweet Day" are registered trademarks of Columbia Records. All rights reserved.

COLUMBIA

BRITANNIA

ON SALE AT ALL **musicland/Sam Goody** LOCATIONS
Over 900 locations nationwide



modern classics



Founder Quincy Jones

Editor-in-Chief Alan Light

Managing Editor Joe Angelo

Music Editor Danyel Smith

Features Editor Robert Kenner

Senior/New Media Editor Ben Mapp

Style Editor Emily Wilbekin

Senior Writers Scott Podolsen-Bryant, Kevin Powell

Associate Editors Henry Hamble, Joseph V. Tinella

Assistant Editor Miami Valdes

Researcher/Reporter O.J. Lima

Writers-at-Large Kathy Dobie, Michael A. Gonzales, Greg Tate

Editorial Assistants Omoronke Idowu, Shani Sazon

Art Director Diddo Ramen

Associate Art Director Lee Ellen Fanning

Picture Editor George Pitts

Graphic Designer David Harley

Fashion Director Derick Procope

Associate Fashion Editor Estée Ochoa

Editorial Production Manager Ryan Jones

Contributors

Harry Allen, Kyle Baker, Giselle Benatar, Rosemary Bray, Cheo H. Coler, Carol Cooper, Robert G. Copeland, Kim France, Bobbito Garcia, Nelson George, Carter Harris, Robert Huller, James Hunter, Laura Jenson, Sacha Jenkins, Lisa Jones, Jaqueline Kgonabale, James Labrecque, Boris Malone, Robert Morales, Elena Oumano, Leonard Pitts Jr., Tom Sinclair, Christine Verin, Henry Wiegman, Dorothy Wilder, Joe Wood, Christian Wright

Photographers

Ruben Alatorre, Kwaku Atonu, B., Butch Baker, Barton Clabome, Davies and Davies, Geoffrey de Boissieu, Cheryl Dunn, Larry Fink, Carl Gonzalez, Jami G.S., Xavier Guadamis, Eric Johnson, Sue Kwon, Dahlia Lina Leal, Chris Leung, Melinda McDaniel, Nease & Taylor, Matthew Polston, Nina Schultz, Stephanie Sednau, Darl Turner, Ellen Von Unwerth, Albert Watson, Eward Williams Jr., Dan Winters, Christian Wilson

Freelance Writer/Copy

Nest Bogen, Dave Bry, Marlene Glickman

Interns

Jamel Brinkley, Michelle Castro, Torin T. Cummings, Tori Dubois, Malcolm Edwards, Temar Leak, Duane Pypou, Rahan Samuels, Dyan Seaton, Dharma Simpson, Daphne Thompson

Publisher John Rollins

Advertising Director Leonard E. Burnett Jr.

New York Sales Manager Kathleen Guthrie

East Coast Music Manager Raymond W. O'Neal Jr.

Account Executive Mark Ekestrom

Account Executive Nelson Boyce

Assistant to the Publisher Christian Drucker

Advertising Assistants Kim Ford, Traci Jenkins

Special Events Director Karla Y. Radford

Marketing Manager Jennine Thilo

Marketing Art Manager Fernando Mancuello

Marketing Assistants Natasha Requena, Lauren Wirtzer

New Media Manager Siddiq T. Bello

Assistant New Media Manager Gregg Bishop

New Media Assistants Sheldon Bryan, Hamidou Diori, Jeremy Horland,

Robin Hayes, Pablo Samijian

New York Advertising Sales

205 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10016, (212) 522-7092

West Coast Advertising Sales

Landmark II Building, 11786 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90025, (310) 268-7200

West Coast Sales Director Onnalee Outmans

West Coast Music Manager Greg Longstreet

Sales Assistant Jason Williams

Midwest Advertising Sales

303 East Ohio Street, 23rd Floor, Chicago, IL 60611, (312) 321-7908

Midwest Sales Manager Kenard Gibbs

Classified Coordinator and Sales Assistant Ann Roccaforte

Circulation Director Dana Secher

Newstand Sales Manager Kencle V. Satchell

Fulfillment Manager Susan Young

Circulation Coordinator Stephanie Schuster

Business Manager Jacqueline P. Joseph

Production Manager Calvin J. Generette

Production Assistant Janelle Rollins

Accounting Manager Liping Wang

Assistant to the President and CEO Remi Watson

Mailroom Manager Jean Princiivil

President and Chief Executive Officer Keith T. Clinkscales

vez is a joint venture between affiliates of Quincy Jones+David Salzman

Entertainment and Time Publishing Ventures, Inc.

Time Inc. Ventures

Robert L. Miller

Tymour Bourne-Ghal, Gilbert Rogin, Karen Magee



Audit Bureau
of Circulations
Member

Subscription requests, address changes, and adjustments should be directed to, ver, Box 59560, Boulder, CO 80322-9560

Thanks to Kenwood, there are now easier ways of
getting great sounding music in your home.



But good luck prying the saw from Granny.

Are you tired of receiving your home entertainment from marginally-talented, tool-wielding family ensembles? It appears that we have your penance: a new Kenwood home stereo system. It probably won't stop your

twang-happy matriarch from performing her tunes altogether, but it may well preclude you from ever having to hear them. For more information or the dealer nearest you, just call 1-800-KENWOOD. Do the music justice.

KENWOOD

HOME AUDIO CAR AUDIO COMMUNICATIONS

mecca™

by tony shetlman



AVAILABLE ONLY AT AUTHORIZED DEALERS

LOOK FOR THE AUTHORIZED DEALER SIGN

FOR INFO CALL 212.695.8866

DON'T FAKE MOVES GET TO KNOW THE REAL!

USE OF MECCA USA LOGOS WITHOUT LICENSING IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED ©

©pyngmed inc/ny ny

Some of us are born

ALL THAT™

Some of us found

NUBIA SKINCARE

Discover the Most Gentle And Effective
ALL NATURAL Skin Care Products On The
Face Of The Earth. PERIOD. GUARANTEED.



ALL THAT™ Miracle Formulas from NUBIA SKIN CARE
The Ultimate Black Skin Care Experience
For A FREE Sample or the Store Nearest You Write to:
KJ AT 244 Madison Ave. STE 298 New York, NY 10016
Or CALL 1-800-77-NUBIA



3145-30452-2/4



INNER CITY BLUES

THE MUSIC OF
MARVIN GAYE

**SURE MAKES YOU
WANNA HOLLER...**

**FEATURING: BONO, BOYZ II MEN, NENEH CHERRY, DIGABLE PLANETS, NONA GAYE, MADONNA WITH MASSIVE ATTACK,
SOUNDS OF BLACKNESS, SPEECH, LISA STANSFIELD, STEVIE WONDER**
**COMING TO YOU IN RECORD STORES OCTOBER 17TH ACCOMPANIED BY THE 90 MINUTE TV SPECIAL ON  THURSDAY
OCTOBER 19TH TO PREVIEW THE ALBUM CALL 212-695-TUNE (8863) CODE # 154
(.28 PER MINUTE OR LESS) **

© 1995 MOTOWN RECORD CO., L.P.





KANI[®]
KARL KANI
B O Y S



KANI
KARL KANI

M E N S W E A R



KANI
KARL KANI

F O O T W E A R

©1995 KARL KANI. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

KARL KANI OWNER/DESIGNER



KANI
KARL KANI

L E A T H E R

**DEF JAM MUSIC GROUP, INC.
TEN YEAR ANNIVERSARY**

THE BOX SET

1985 - 1995

THE HISTORY OF DEF JAM, THE HISTORY OF HIP HOP

This never before available 4 CD set contains 59 classic songs from ground breaking early R&B artists that set new trends in black music.



**LL Cool J • Public Enemy • Slick Rick • Beastie Boys • 3rd Bass • Onyx • EPMD •
Montell Jordan • Mokenstef • Warren G • Method Man • Redman • Boss • Domino •
Erick Sermon • Nice & Smooth • South Central Cartel • Nikki D. • Oran 'Juice' Jones**



IN STORES NOVEMBER 21, 1995



clothing

1-800-903-DAWG



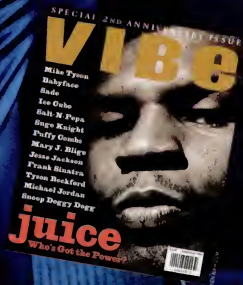
Bryant Young
World Champion 49ers
Defensive Tackle
"1994 Defensive Rookie Of The Year"

Curtis Conway
Bears
Wide Receiver
"Rising Star"

Chester McClinton
Raiders
Defensive Tackle
"All-Pro"

DON'T THINK ABOUT IT...

GET IT.



1/2 Off 10 Issues For \$11.95

SEND IN THE ATTACHED CARD OR WRITE, VIBE P.O. BOX 59500 BOULDER, CO 80322-9500

PATRA PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIC JOHNSON

Copyright © 1994

JAZZHOLE the



© Rhino/Banana Recordings, Inc.
A 514 All rights reserved. B000000 92386

"Their stylistic grooves truly represent the limitless boundaries of urban music. Fantastic!"

—NOTRE DAME OBSERVER

"Sound like the coolest thing since US3 and the Brand New Heavies."

—MUSIC RETAILING

"For lovers of Jazz, Hip-hop, Soul and Reggae, it's all neatly packaged in the Jazzhole!"

—KROONICK

Photographer Sante D'Orazio admits that it was both "easy and a pleasure" to shoot superstar Whitney Houston for this month's cover story ("Breathe Again," page 78). "It was inspiring to meet someone with such fine talent as Whitney," says the Brooklyn native. "She has a look and energy I like, so while she danced, I just went with the flow." D'Orazio has contributed to *Esquire*, *GQ*, *Italian Vogue*, and *Vanity Fair*.



SANTE



"OLD SCHOOL" SACHA

VIBE contributing writer and Queens native Sacha Jenkins returned to that N.Y.C. borough to examine the Queensbridge Housing Projects' role as a breeding ground for new hip hop talent ("Bridge Over Troubled Water," page 100). "It's the sociopolitical environment that inspires the music that's coming out right now," he says. "Things have gotten more decadent, but you wouldn't know it on the surface." Jenkins, the editor-in-chief of *ego trip*, has also contributed to *Urk*, *Paper*, and *Rap Pages*.

CONTRIBUTORS

Writer Farai Chideya "breaks down the preconceived notions of affirmative action" in her essay in this month's Get Up on It ("The Best Affirmative Action? Your Vote," page 63). Chideya is a writer for MTV News.... London-born photographer Andrew Williams captured the sobbing Queensbridge Housing Projects for "Bridge Over Troubled Water," he has contributed to *The Fair, Interview*, and his hometown's *Sunday Times Magazine*.... Writer Jason Fine examines the rise of Northern California hip hop ("Baywatch," page 106). He is the associate arts editor at the *San Francisco Bay Guardian*.

About record mogul Andre Harrell ("Dre Day," page 92), writer Anthony DeCurtis says, "Andre is a model of how to simultaneously take care of your current business while focusing on your future. He was still at Uptown when we spoke, yet I really felt his energy and excitement about taking over Motown." A former editor at *Rolling Stone*, DeCurtis is presently the editorial director at VH1 and wrote text for *Images of Rock & Roll* (Rolling Stone Press/Little Brown).



ANTHONY



DANIEL

"I get excited about rappers and their music," says artist/photographer Daniel Hastings of shooting his first fashion layout ("Cold Chillin'," page 108), which features Q-Tip of A Tribe Called Quest, Das EFX, and Junior M.A.F.I.A. "I think of them as characters in a comic book—being good guys and bad guys—and I shoot them in an exaggerated manner, like hip hop itself." The Panama City native directed Jeru the Damaja's video "Can't Stop the Prophet."

Deborah Gregory profiled R&B trio Mo'NenStef (page 124) and actress Lauren Velez (Look, page 126) in this issue. Gregory reveals that Velez doesn't possess the "tough veneer" she presents on *New York Undercover*, and adds that she "is a warm New York Latino sweetheart." Gregory is a contributing writer for *Essence*, was recently the subject of England's Channel 4 documentary *Looking for Mr. Right*, and is presently costarring off-Broadway in the play *Transsexuals on the Run*.



DEBORAH



FOOTWEAR

UNITED STATES

VUARNET FOOTWEAR, INC
89 Leuning St.
South Hackensack
N.J. 07606
1.800.708.3330

CANADA

RAYMOND LANCTOT, LTEE
5790, rue Pare
Montreal (Quebec)
H4P 2M2
1.800.361.5045

BENELUX GREAT BRITAIN

PAVIC INTERNATIONAL BV
Valeriusplein 30
1075 BJ Amsterdam
The Netherlands
+31.20.675.58.55



V U A R N E T
F O O T W E A R



berck mid-top



sarlat low-top

THE VIBE SNIPE BOARD

HIP HOP QUOTE
PUMP IT UP HOMEBOY!

CHETO CONQUEST
E-Z on the
motion
SINGLE IN STORES NOW!



Fo' Clips
IN STORES NOW!
Just Be Thankful



chapter 3

nationwide
rip ridaz
IN STORES NOW!



chapter 3

damu ridas
IN STORES NOW!

JUVENILE
STYLE
IN STORES NOW!



FROM THE BAY... TO LA
WE JUST DON'T STOP!



P.M. DAWN
JESUS WEPT
THE NEW ALBUM

Produced by P.M. DAWN

Includes **DOWNTOWN VENUS**
You Could Be Into You But You Don't Know What You're Like



ISLAND JAMAICA CLASSICS

the best in reggae

REINTRODUCING SOME OF THE FINEST
REGGAE MUSIC FROM THE PAST 20 YEARS.
INCLUDES PREVIOUSLY UNRELEASED
CLASSIC CUTS AND NEW DUB VERSIONS
WITH A FRESH FLAVOR.



AUGUSTUS PABLO



Time Warp Dub Clash



REGGAE REFRESHERS VOL. 2



WAITING SOULS



ISLAND JAMAICA™ AN ISLAND RECORDS, INC. COMPANY

LOOK FOR THESE NEW RELEASES

Let NAJEE fill
your holidays with
WONDER

Stevie Wonder touched our hearts and souls with "Songs In The Key Of Life." Now, renowned saxophonist Najee - along with some of his friends George Duke, Herbie Hancock, Ray Parker Jr., Stanley Clarke and many others - pays tribute to Stevie with his new album

najee

**PLAYS SONGS
FROM THE KEY
OF LIFE**

A TRIBUTE TO
STEVIE WONDER

FEATURING
"I Wish"

"Pastime Paradise"

"Sir Duke"

18 TRACKS IN ALL

Produced by George Duke

NAJEE PLAYS SONGS FROM THE KEY OF LIFE
A TRIBUTE TO STEVIE WONDER



The songs are Stevie. The sound is Najee.
The combination is pure magic.

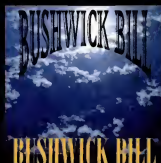
EMI
Records

BUCKWORTH
music.



Operation Stackola

featuring two capone, shock g. m.c. jay, and o-walk
the gold album featuring the gold single
"i got 5 on it" and
"playa hata"



of the gets boys

Phantom of the Rapra

featuring the new single
"only god knows"



Rated G

featuring the single
"one night stand"

coming soon:
face mob, geto boys

watch for videos on



©1995 NOO TRYBE RECORDS, INC.

The International
Reggae Smash
LUCIANO
Where There Is Life

HIS DEBUT

ISLAND JAMAICA RELEASE
CONTAINS 12 POWERFUL TUNES,
EACH AN ELOQUENT TESTIMONY
TO HIS LIVING FAITH.

Features

"It's Me Again Jah"

and the

#1 U.K. REGGAE SINGLE
"Your World And Mine"



PRODUCED BY PHILIP "PHIT" BUNELL FOR STEPHEN'S PRODUCTIONS
ISLAND JAMAICA, AN ISLAND RECORDS, INC. RELEASE
© 1995 ISLAND RECORDS, INC.

THE VIBE SNIPE BOARD

FOR PLAYAZ ONLY



IN-A-MINUTE RECORDS



TOTALLY INSANE • BACKSTREET LIFE



ONE DOG • I HATE YOU WITH A PASSION



RED POSSE • RUTHLESS BY LAW



POOH-MAN • 4TH & BROADWAY



SEND IN FOR FREE CATALOG
P.O. Box 832748, Emeryville, CA 94602
©1995 IN-A-MINUTE RECORDS

...DON'T SLEEP

The Official “Mix Tape” Featuring Freestyles by...

Erick Sermon
Busta Rhymes
Method Man
Redman

Fat Joe
and New Records by
Akinyele &
Sadat X



60 MINUTES OF PUNK

Plus, Classic Hip-Hop Tracks Like...

Nobody Beats
The Biz
Rock The Bells
Peter Piper

Award Tour
Wu-Tang Clan
Ain't Nuthing
Ta F' Wit
& Puerto Rico



In Stores Now On
LOUDO Records
Cassettes, CDs and Wax.



BMG
Bertelsmann Music Group

LOOK FOR THESE NEW RELEASES

IT RISES IN THE EAST,
AND SETS IN THE WEST....

BUT IT'S HIGHEST POINT IS IN THE MIDDLE.

FROM THE CHI'

CRUCIAL CONFLICT

COMING IN '96



IT'S THE SEASON TO GIVE GOLD



- Beenie Man & Luciano
- Daddy Screw & Donovan Steele
- Garnett Silk & Richie Stephens
- Bounty Killer
- Beres Hammond
- Capleton
- Junior Reid
- Buju Banton
- Beenie Man
- Lady Saw
- Jigsy King
- Yami Bolo
- Marcia Griffiths & Bounty Killer
- Rayvon
- Ambelique



Also available on VP LPs, CDs, and Cassettes
Reggae Gold '94 (or 1201), and Reggae Gold (or 1201)



VP 1429



VP RECORDS 87-89 FORTH STREET, JAMAICA NY 11429
Tel: (718) 291-7058 Fax: (718) 858-9973
VP FLORIDA 1810 S.W. 21ST STREET, W. HOLLYWOOD FLORIDA 33063
Tel: (305) 966-6744 Fax: (305) 966-6786

MUSIC MADE IN REGGAE MUSIC

TO FIND OUT WHERE YOU CAN GET VP MUSIC IN YOUR AREA CALL (718) 291-7058

KEITH MURRAY & REDMAN



boots and jeans by N.Y. Lugz Co. 212-255-7637

Lugz



The Notorious B.I.G. ["Things Done Changed"] by Mimi Valdés, October] is da illlest! I have to commend y'all on that informative, dope-ass story on the flyest rapper in the industry. Biggie got the whole industry locked the fuck up. No other rapper has come with a completely ill, jeep-rockin', hard-core, reality-based, fly-ass album like Big Poppa. And Biggie doesn't only represent on da mike, he even reps as plain-ole Chris Wallace, the "Mayor" of Bed-Stuy. He takes care of business; his wife, Faith (who is also the shit); his daughter; her daughter; his moms; and his peeps. He and Faith are "Bigger" than life.

TARA T. QUEENS, NY

What does Faith Evans see in the Notorious B.I.G.? Am I mistaken, or does he look like a fat Bernie Mac? Faith is a very attractive woman and could have anyone she wanted. Why pick this wannabe pimp? In some songs he acts like he can get all the women (maybe now that he has money he can), but before his fame, the ho down the street wouldn't have given him a second look. In the story in your October issue, he states, "When I stopped hustling and started making songs, it was the worst." The only thing he was hustling was his fat ass into the kitchen to grab another slice of pie. I think the only reason Faith married Biggie Smalls is because he's makin' money and is so popular. And I can't blame her—I would've married Evers Rolfe's character Florida Evans from *Good Times* back in the day when she was popular too.

SEAN ROWE HONOLULU, HI

Everyone loves Biggie Smalls. He is a great rapper and a down-to-earth person who has worked hard to turn his life around. Even though Biggie wanted to die at one time, he has now lived to have it all: the cars, the jewelry, the clothes, and most of all a pretty, talented wife who chenshis him. I think the Notorious B.I.G. is unique, talented, and a hard worker. He deserves recognition for all he's done.

NATASHA DAVIS WEST PALM BEACH, FL

First, I want to give a shout-out to Biggie and Faith and say that if life is a game, then he is playing it smart. Also, much love to Faith and her voice of integrity and soul. Much more blessings, and I hope more is in store for the happy couple.

T.J. YEBOAH LADSON, SC

Your cover of the Notorious B.I.G. and Faith is a classic. I looked at it for a solid week, then filed it away beside my two *Rolling Stone* covers of Prince—with Vanity's hand stuck in his britches—and a blissfully naked John Lennon nestled against a blue-jeaned Yoko. It's one of those photographs that behooves you to think again.

PEARL CLEAGE ATLANTA, GA

Emil Wilbekin's comment that Faith Evans's voice ["You Gotta Have Faith," October] conjures a resonant mix of Minnie Riperton, Ella Fitzgerald, and Chaka Kahn is the most preposterous thing I have ever read in this lifetime and probably the next. Faith needs to change her name to Hope, as in "She would Hope she conjures a resonant mix of Minnie, Ella, and Chaka."

CRAIG JONSO GLEN ARDEN, MD

Faith is all that. The girl can sing, and you can definitely hear the vocal changes in Mary J. since Faith sung with her on Mary's second album, *My Life*. Faith has her own style and

can't be categorized. Keep blowing up, girl, 'cause your vocals are legit.

SUNSHINE TACOMA, WA

Your stories on the Notorious B.I.G. and his lovely bride, Faith, were the bomb, baby. The Bad Boy and Bad Girl have definitely got it going on for themselves, not to mention having the music biz on lockdown at the moment. I wish them much success and happiness.

SEAN "2 MUCH" CARTER YONKERS, NY

The fact that Ziggy Marley and the Melody Makers ["The Family Stand" by Rob Kenner, October] are tenacious enough to make their own kind of music and endure the horrors that such status opens them up to—like the robbery at Cedella's house by police posing as police officers—is more than just typical "pop hype." And it is beyond me why a lot of so-called reggae artists would rather push "poom poom" sexuality and smoke spliffs than deal with the political climate of a country long troubled with injustice. At least Mr. Marley and company are choosing to honor their father's social beliefs.

JOSEPH M. BAILEY PHILADELPHIA, PA

It is time people stop expecting another Hon. Robert Nesta Marley and start respecting Ziggy's music. We are living in a different time and a different place, and Ziggy has "so much things to say right now" that we all should listen up.

MARULENA JUDAH BRITT SOUTH NORWALK, CT

I got fed up when Ras Kass from Cali ["Off the Dome" by T-Love, October] said, "It's the West that's bringing freestyle back, niggas got tired of the East puttin' us down." First of all, I don't know where T-Love is from, but writing a piece on freestyling without representing the Big East shows she's biased. Now, Ras Kass put his Ras foot in his mouth, because you can't bring something back that was never there. The West never had freestyle in the first place. Let's set the record straight: Freestyle was born in New York City. Hip hop is for everyone, but don't try to change history, because there's always gonna be a New York nigga to set your ass straight!

REAL B-BOY CORAL SPRINGS, FL

Living on the West Coast, I have long recognized the emphasis we put on freestyle rap. At any hip hop function I

WALL

have attended, the mike was passed and all MCs flowed off the dome (I, too, freestyle and put in "my time for hip hop"). It's good to finally let the East Coast and Midwest know that gangs and their lifestyle and gangsta rap are not a way of life for everyone in the West.

T. WELLS ANAHEIM HILLS, CA

Your brilliantly written story on Larenz Tate ["Looking For Larenz" by Scott Poulson-Bryant, October] was the best. He is the most sophisticated, FOINest, and intelligent young actor working in



YOUR BEST SHOT

JULIE WAYMAN, ERIE, PA

Hollywood. Articles like these make me love VIBE.

DANIELLE TITEES
TROY, MI

As a heavy comic book reader and collector since age nine (I'm now 29), and an African-American, I believe your story on minority superheroes ["Toon Black, Toon Strong" by Joseph V. Tirella, October] is the most in-depth and informative piece I've read since a *New York Times* comics story printed in 1993. Tirella's article even raised the heavily debated topic that minority superheroes are merely recycled versions of their white counterparts and possess similar powers. But personally, I feel minority superheroes are emerging as forces to be reckoned with. And if you had any more information on the subject, I'd have thought I was reading *Wizard* comic book magazine instead of VIBE.

FRANK ALEXIS JR.
BROOKLYN, NY

Don't get me wrong, I like TLC, R. Kelly, and Barry White ["Till the Levee Breaks" by Greg Tate, Start, October], but how about some diversity? The

urban (black) stations won't go near a Tracy Chapman, Dionne Farris, or even Robert Cray record! Meanwhile, the alternative (white) stations think it's all right to just play dead rock legend Jimi Hendrix and black alternative music poster dude Lenny Kravitz (no disrespect). It's as if the alternative stations in my town have never heard of Bad Brains, Follow 4 Now, or Fishbone. In my opinion, Living Colour's last album, *Stain*, rocks much harder than the latest R.E.M. record. And finally, I want to give a shout-out to fighting what the Family Stand once called "plantation radio."

ED SCOTT
CHARLESTON, SC

I was 15 years old when I first heard Larry Graham's *EarthQuake!* I couldn't believe how phat it was at that time. The idea of a black radio station playing phunk metal opened my ears to a totally different form of black music. I wish black radio stations today would have the balls to play different kinds of black music rather than running the same fucked-up soundtrack cuts every five minutes.

DEE SACRED
SEATTLE, WA

Congratulations to the entire editorial team responsible for the Special 2nd Anniversary Issue [September]. *The Face* and *i-D* magazine, here in London, are empty bourgeois cultural vessels on every level in comparison to VIBE.

DAVID KERR
LONDON, ENGLAND

Kevin Powell's story ["What Kind of Power He Got," September] definitely examines the issues on this Mike Tyson fan's mind. No question, Iron Mike has the juice inside the ring (he reduced a hurricane to a light breeze in the first round), but while in the hands of Don King, master manipulator, I don't think Tyson can even spar with the electrified-hair, word-a-minute man. To his credit, I don't feel Mike will allow Don King to wreck shop with his finances (like he did before his incarceration), because Mike is moving on to better and bigger things. (But what was with the leather pants and the Red Hot Chili Peppers on the MTV Music Awards?) Mike Tyson is no fake, and he's here, juice, seeds, and peel.

D. WILLIAMS
TORONTO, ONT., CANADA

Frank Sinatra ["O.G." by Bönz Malone, September] is a tough guy on the side of good. If he didn't make it in Hollywood, he probably would have become a gangster. And to the Italian community he represents the ultimate symbol of fatherhood. Besides the Beatles, his stuff was the first music I heard on the radio. There's only one Sinatra, just like there's only one Whitney Houston or Mike Tyson. Also, you're right on the mark for noticing that blacks and Italians have a lot in common—Italy and Africa are in close proximity on the world map.

HANK FESTA
LOS ANGELES, CA

Larry Hoover's words ["Ghost in the Machine" by Josh Tyrangiel, September] have helped thousands of young black men turn their lives around. I know this personally because I am one of those individuals. Up until three and a half years ago, I was proving my dedication to the Gangsta Disciples by senseless violence—until the penitentiary got me. When I came to the Indiana State Farm Penitentiary, where I am now incarcerated, the concept of



growth and development was being taught. The same brothers whom I once banged with on the street, both young and old, were now stressing the value of education, as well as helping youngsters such as myself to fully understand economic and political issues. Many of us are now successfully making the transformation from violence to books, and have learned how to kick it about more than cars, sex, and drugs. We believe this is possible because of the man the white establishment is afraid of—Larry Hoover. Mr. Hoover has changed, and in the process of that change he has helped save many lives from the road to destruction.

**CHRIS HARRISON
GREENCASTLE, IN**

I applaud Mr. Hoover for redirecting his past negative image into something that is not only positive but greatly needed in the black community. It's obvious that programs set forth in the past have not succeeded in redirecting the goals of our youth but have succeeded in stacking the penitentiaries with our young generation. Is that the ultimate goal? Men of Mr. Hoover's

caliber are greatly needed in our rapidly decaying inner cities, and furthermore, he would probably make a stronger political figure than political prisoner.

**A. WILLIAMS
LITTLETON, CO**

Is this C. DeLores Tucker ["Mama Said Knock You Out" by Kevin Powell, September] for real? *Criminal Minded* is pornographic smut? Jack Kemp and the right wing are concerned about the fate of our black children? Snoop Doggy Dogg's *Doggystyle* album is to blame for the spread of AIDS in the black community? Wake up, Miss Tucker! If you are so worried about being called a ho, then stop playing the ho for the Republican party! Pick up some headphones and actually listen to some of these artists before you criticize and label them, because if you don't, you're more responsible for promoting a negative black image than anyone else.

**ETHAN KLINE
CLAREMONT, CA**

I like hip hop and hardcore rap, and wonder why C. DeLores Tucker is fight-

ing so hard to stop this music. Why should Congress be worried about this? Snoop doesn't control my life. He's there to sell CDs. He's not at Tower Records putting a gun to my head to buy his CD. Check this: If Bob Dole or Phil Gramm becomes president, I feel sorry for all of us as Americans.

**WILLIAM JOHNSON
CONSHOHOCKEN, PA**

I have no political interests nor do I need the limelight, but I do have children and grandchildren, and work with children, and I feel gangsta rap demoralizes not only the females but the rappers themselves. The day Dr. Dre, Snoop, Tupac, and the rest of those vulgar, insidious rappers realize the damage they're doing to our black youth, the better off our black community will be.

**RENA COLLIER
CHICAGO, IL**

I would like to congratulate Tyson Beckford for his enormous contribution toward the black community ["Dark and Lovely" by Scott Poulson-Bryant, September]. He has

shown us that black people can succeed in a predominantly white profession—high-fashion modeling. Our race is a beautiful and cultural one that deserves recognition. He is one of the very few black men who has actually signed with a multimillion dollar clothing line (Ralph Lauren). Tyson can widely open doors for other black models—male and female—in the fashion industry.

**DANIELLE BARROIS
NEW ORLEANS, LA**

A tall, dark, chocolate dream is the only way I know to describe Tyson Beckford. The man is fierce. His features are compliments straight from the motherland. And your story also revealed that not only does Tyson have a sexy image but he also has an intelligent mind.

**CHANDRA BLAKELY
JAMAICA, NY**

It's bad enough that Phyllis Hyman [obituary by Steven Ivory, Start, September] was "blacklisted" for most of her career—which kept her from achieving the status that she should have attained—but your story



Take it to the streets. The asphalt jungle you call home. Your music will sound fierce in any terrain when your stereo system is from Panasonic. Like 120-watt CD head units with 1-Bit MASH[®] technology, high-definition bass, and an auxiliary input. And one of the smallest 6-disc CD changers known to the free world.

Now we've got the only car stereos with a built-in recording chip. Up to 20 seconds of memory (that's more than some of your friends have) to record directions, phone numbers or stuff right off the radio. Hey, sometimes your car is the only refuge you've got. Load it up.

Go play in traffic.

Partial Sponsor of the 1996 U.S. Olympic Team

**Panasonic[®]
car audio**

*The stereo dominates the noisy traffic. MASH[®] and 1-Bit MASH[®] technology was invented by TETEC Labs. MASH is a trademark of TETEC.

ONCE IN A WHILE A MAN COMES ALONG WHO ISN'T AFRAID TO BE A GENTLEMAN.

BRITISH STERLING

THE LEGEND LIVES ON
COLOGNE AND AFTER SHAVE

had the audacity to mock her death by saying she decided to "check out." I disagree with the way she chose to give up on life, but I also realize that I didn't walk in her shoes. Ms. Hyman was one of the greatest vocalists this earth was ever blessed to have, and it is sad that she had heartless, cruel, non-tongue-biting, poor excuses for journalists writing about her demise. Mr. Ivory should be ashamed of his ignorance.

**A PISSED-OFF FAN
CHICAGO, IL**

It is definitely a girl thing and not a woman thing to say that gangsta rap does not cause sexism ["Girl Thing" by Joan Morgan, *Revolutions*, September]. I agree gangsta rap is a by-product of sexism, but it also perpetuates it. What does Ms. Morgan think goes on in a 12-year-old girl's mind when she hears the words *female*, *girl*, and *woman* being used interchangeably with *bitch*, *ho*, and *trick*? By no means does she think that our black men love, respect, or value us. I have personally sat on trains or been at corner stores and have heard 9-, 10-, and 11-year-old boys refer to girls as "dat bitch." If you think they didn't get it off the tape they had glued in their Walkman all day, you're mistaken. My point is, gangsta rap ain't doin' jack for nobody but putting ones in brothas' pockets while we shake our asses to the very songs that dis us. It's time to stop excusing the men who sell the albums at our expense. Any black woman who allows or accepts a man to continuously refer to us as bitches and ho's to our face or through the media is just as much as a sucker, a weak link, and a tragedy.

**DEIDRA BRYANT
COLLEGE PARK, GA**

Much respect to the Afro-stylistic, butterfly-collared, polyester, polyester, *poly-ester* Don Cornelius of the 1970s [Props by Michael Gonzales, *September*]. He is alive and well in reruns (or perhaps first runs) on Japanese TV, doing for Japanese soul brothers and sisters now what he did for us back in the day. I don't know if the Don can get credit for the bell-bottoms currently coveted by Japanese hipsters or the recent power surge in the under-

ground and mainstream hip hop scene here, but I do know that his influence is understood and appreciated by everybody in the know. Juice? Don has it. And he's using it to spread peace, love, and soul-*oul* to all corners of the globe.

**SUZETTE DUNCAN
IWATEKEN, JAPAN**

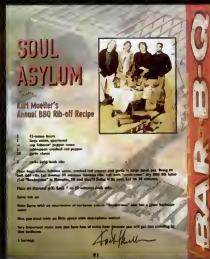
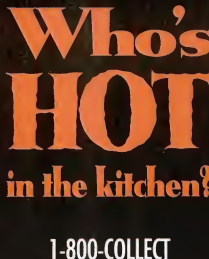
As members of the group *Portrait*, we were quite surprised by DeVante Swing's statement in your Jodeci story ["Tuff Love" by Danyel Smith, *August*]. Contrary to what DeVante may think, there are many talented male R&B groups in the industry who take their musical careers seriously—and whose aim is not simply to make a buck, but also to make a positive statement. That is important in our society, given the stereotypical image of black men: oversexed, insulting, disrespectful to black women, and always holding their genitals. The above-mentioned "image" is abundant in the recording industry and is used constantly as a marketing tool to sell records. If this works for Jodeci, fine. However, degrading other artists who choose not to express themselves that way is not necessary. It's time that we as artists, and young black men, recognize and accept our responsibility and position as role models.

**MICHAEL ANGELO SAULSBERRY
ERIC KIRKLAND
KIRT JACKSON
IRVING WASHINGTON
NEW YORK, NY**

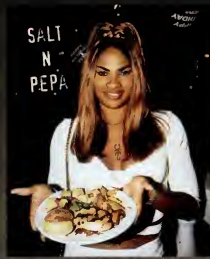
VIBE encourages mail and photographs from readers. Please send letters to VIBE MAIL, 205 Lexington Avenue, 3rd Floor, New York, N.Y. 10016. Or send E-mail to vibe@vibe.com. Send photos to VIBE YOUR BEST SHOT (same address). Include your full name, address, and daytime phone number. Letters may be edited for length and clarity. Photo submissions will become the property of VIBE and will not be returned.

CORRECTIONS

- The photo of Colin Powell in November's *Get Up* on it section was taken by David Viscio/The White House.
- The photo of Yvaid in November's *Boom* Shots column (*Revolutions*) was taken by Brian Jahn.



1-800-COLLECT
Is Proud To Join Over
100 Musical Artists
To Support
"A Musical Feast"
Cookbook
A Celebrity Cookbook of Favorite Recipes for
the Benefit of Homeless Organizations.
1-800-COLLECT



Order this unique full color hard bound cookbook now for only \$19.95 (plus shipping and handling) by dialing 1-800-420-4209
...and with every cookbook purchased by December 30, 1995 you will receive \$9 in free 1-800-COLLECT calls!

*Proceeds benefit: Empty The Shelters, National Coalition For The Homeless, Coalition For The Homeless New York, and Coalition On Homelessness San Francisco



Buy this jersey and



have a lot in common with Alonzo Mourning. Like the same jersey.



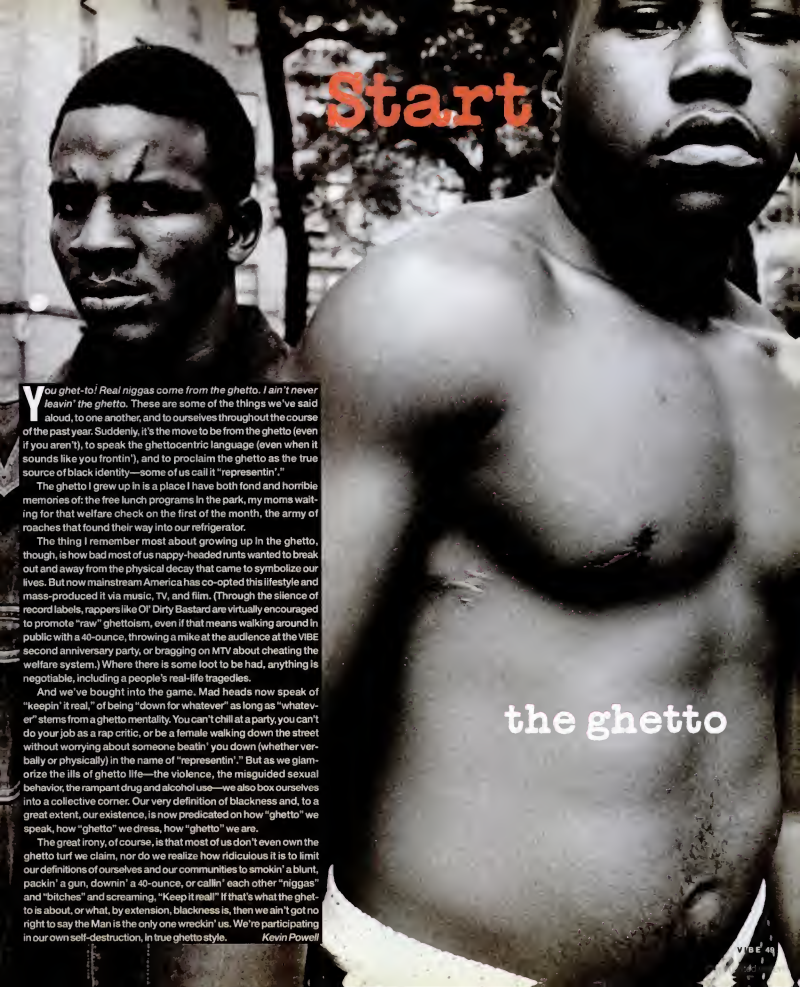
*Alonzo Mourning is a human being.
You are a human being. Alonzo Mourning
wears an authentic Georgetown Jersey
by NIKE. You wear an authentic
Georgetown Jersey by NIKE. Spooky*

Copyrighted © Alonzo

	THE TOP 501 REASONS	
	REASON No.	033

WHAT DON'T THEY MATCH?





Start

You ghet-to! Real niggas come from the ghetto. I ain't never leavin' the ghetto. These are some of the things we've said aloud, to one another and to ourselves throughout the course of the past year. Suddenly, it's the move to be from the ghetto (even if you aren't), to speak the ghetto-centric language (even when it sounds like you frontin'), and to proclaim the ghetto as the true source of black identity—some of us call it "representin'."

The ghetto I grew up in is a place I have both fond and horrible memories of: the free lunch programs in the park, my moms waiting for that welfare check on the first of the month, the army of roaches that found their way into our refrigerator.

The thing I remember most about growing up in the ghetto, though, is how bad most of us nappy-headed runts wanted to break out and away from the physical decay that came to symbolize our lives. But now mainstream America has co-opted this lifestyle and mass-produced it via music, TV, and film. (Through the silence of record labels, rappers like Ol' Dirty Bastard are virtually encouraged to promote "raw" ghettoism, even if that means walking around in public with a 40-ounce, throwing a mike at the audience at the VIBE second anniversary party, or bragging on MTV about cheating the welfare system.) Where there is some loot to be had, anything is negotiable, including a people's real-life tragedies.

And we've bought into the game. Mad heads now speak of "keepin' it real," of being "down for whatever" as long as "whatever" stems from a ghetto mentality. You can't chill at a party, you can't do your job as a rap critic, or be a female walking down the street without worrying about someone beatin' you down (whether verbally or physically) in the name of "representin'." But as we glamorize the ills of ghetto life—the violence, the misguided sexual behavior, the rampant drug and alcohol use—we also box ourselves into a collective corner. Our very definition of blackness and, to a great extent, our existence, is now predicated on how "ghetto" we speak, how "ghetto" we dress, how "ghetto" we are.

The great irony, of course, is that most of us don't even own the ghetto turf we claim, nor do we realize how ridiculous it is to limit our definitions of ourselves and our communities to smokin' a blunt, packin' a gun, downin' a 40-ounce, or callin' each other "niggas" and "bitches" and screaming, "Keep it real!" If that's what the ghetto is about, or what, by extension, blackness is, then we ain't got no right to say the Man is the only one wreckin' us. We're participating in our own self-destruction. In true ghetto style. *Kevin Powell*

the ghetto

Coolio, comedians Faizon and Ricky Harris (middle row, left to right), and company bagging in L.A.



Snap Happy

Mother jokes make mad money

Insults are big business these days. In fact, an entire cottage industry has emerged out of snapping, the art of quickly improvising insults and put-downs. First came *Snaps* (Quill/William Morrow) in 1993, intended to be a one-shot joke book celebrating the African-American art of "playing the dozens," which dates back at least to slavery. Its success yielded a follow-up the next year, *Double Snaps*; together the two volumes have sold more than a quarter of a million copies. A third volume, *Triple Snaps*, was just published.

"When we did the first book, we had no idea that there would be more," says Monteria Ivey of 2 Bros. & a White Guy, the New York-based company that started the fran-

chise. The trio organized two impromptu recording sessions, one in New York featuring Lords of the Underground and the clown prince of rap, Biz Markie, and one in Los Angeles (where snapping is called bagging) with *Df Comedy Jam* veterans Ricky Harris and Faizon along with Coolio. The result is *Snaps: The Album, Vol. 1* (Big Beat/Atlantic).

The participants showed each other no quarter while recording the album. Coolio, the self-proclaimed "master of the mother joke," withstood a relentless verbal beating by Harris and Johnson. "You're the only nigga I know that scares Shabba Ranks," they taunted him. "So you old you make Kool Moe Dee look young."

"They were all professional comedians," Coolio recalls. "So they was, like, 'This nigga's a rapper, we gonna team up on him.' But I got in a few good ones on Harris. I told him, 'You look like you shaved with a broke Thunderbird bottle.' "The situation was completely familiar to Coolio: "In junior high, people used to pay me to bag on people. They'd say, 'I'll buy your lunch—talk about that mother-fucker right there.' "

The company now boasts a clothing line (Snaps Apparel) and two highly rated half-hour HBO specials, plus a movie deal (a studio approached them with an offer) and a CD-ROM, *Snaps: The Computer Urbanizer*, which customizes your PC or Mac with wisecracking icons that "give your computer attitude." Bet there are no snaps about Bill Gates's mother.

Joseph V. Tirella

Sheer Genius

When Mariah Carey's "Fantasy" debuted at No. 1 on the *Billboard* pop singles chart, it marked the first time a female artist had accomplished the feat. But it's not the first time those bouncy synth notes—lifted from the Tom Tom Club's '81 hit, "Genius of Love"—have juiced a hip hop track. Ever since Grandmaster Flash recut "Genius" for 1982's "It's Nasty," the song has been sampled by a host of artists, including Ziggy Marley, Ant Banks, Smooth, and most recently, dancehall star Papa San. Husband-and-wife songwriting team (and Talking Heads members) Chris Frantz and Tina Weymouth always appreciate being sampled, but particularly enjoy "Fantasy."

"We love Mariah's version," says Weymouth. "She captured the sweetness and innocence of the original." Their offspring, however, prefer the "Fantasy" remix with Ol' Dirty Bastard. "Our kids are big fans of his group. They think I'm cool now." David Bry



bullets point-blank news

STAR TURNS

What was the atmosphere like at the all-star shoot for Tupac's "Temptations" video? "Very positive," according to Yvette Lang, the clip's executive producer. "It was like a big party." While Tupac was unable to attend the shoot (he's still doing time in an upstate New York prison), director David Nelson had no problem coaxing Coolio, Ice-T, Adina Howard, Yo Yo, Isaac Hayes, Treach, and others to the video's L.A. set. "There's a lot of people who want to come and support him in this difficult time," said Nelson. "We want him to win a Video Music Award while incarcerated!"



THE GREATEST LOVE OF ALL

When the Notorious B.I.G. was joined by his better half, Faith Evans, on the pop singles chart in September—he hit with "One More Chance," she with "You Used to Love Me"—they became the first married couple so entwined since Whitney Houston ("Queen of the Night") and Bobby Brown ("Something in Common") in January '94. How did the first family of hip hop celebrate the achievement? "We really didn't do anything," says Biggie. "Except we congratulated each other in a big way."

SOMEWHERE BETWEEN HEAVEN AND HELL THERE'S
A PLACE CALLED GANGSTA'S PARADISE



COOLIO

GANGSTA'S PARADISE

THE ALBUM





Ask^{the} Rap Bandit

Q: When I write to my favorite artists, they don't always write back. Is it possible that they throw out most of their fan mail? *M.A., CLEARWATER, FL*

A: At first I wasn't going to answer your letter, but something changed my mind. Now if only I could get this ketchup stain off your name and address.

Q: Do you agree that Eazy-E vs. Dr. Dre was the greatest hip hop rivalry of all time? *G.B.C., LAS VEGAS, NV*

A: Hip hop may never again see a beef reach that level, unless you count the battle between "I Wanna Be Down" and "I Wanna Be Down (Remix)."

Q: Now that the East Coast has climbed

back on top, can we refer to New York City as America's Home of Hip Hop? *S.C., HOUSTON, TX*

A: Nah, I think New York City should hang on to its better-known nicknames, such as the City That Never Sleeps, the Big Apple, and the City Most on Puffy's Dick.

Q: I don't own a turntable anymore. Do you know anyone who would be interested in buying all of my old rap records? *F.S.I., MONTICELLO, MN*

A: Yeah—me. I've been collecting old 12-inches and other types of hip hop memorabilia for years. Recently, a reader from Harlem sold me a test pressing of "It's Yours," a program from the Live Aid concert autographed by Run-D.M.C., and a car stereo that once belonged to Queen Latifah.

Q: Why doesn't Busta Rhymes release a solo album instead of letting other rappers make millions stealing his style? *B.G., COLUMBIA, SC*

A: Those who can, do. Those who can't, teach.

Q: In the song "Oh My God," what does Phife Dog say in the gap between the words "anti-..." and "...big up is who I be?"

C.H.I., LANCASTER, CA

A: "Jew me, sue me."

Q: Rap videos are sexist and demeaning to women. How much longer before the norm of such filth includes full frontal nudity? *W.S., WARREN, NJ*

A: I'm working on stopping partial nudity in videos first. Now if only I can get that written commitment from Kid Capri to never appear topless again.

Q: Why did the Notorious B.I.G. change the version of "One More Chance" for the single and the video? I understand that the lyrics on the disc weren't fit for TV, but he changed the beats too.

J.W., ARROYO GRANDE, CA

A: Biggie's confused, but that's to be expected when you make a new song every day.

Q: The N-word is always discussed, but aren't there other issues regarding race that affect hip hop?

R.J., INDEPENDENCE, MO

A: Yeah, like why all white guys look like cops?

Got a question about hip hop?

Hit me off at: The Rap Bandit, P.O. Box 48382, Philadelphia, PA 19144, or rapbandit@vibe.com.

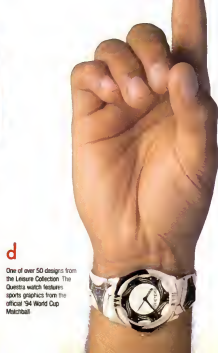
Everything you always wanted to know about **hip hop** but were afraid to ask

A sign of the times.



a

Equipment Chronograph—
a high-tech performance
sport watch in two-tone
solid stainless steel



d

One of over 50 designs from
the Leisure Collection. The
Quattro watch features
sporty graphics from the
official '94 World Cup
Matchball.



i

Designed for everyday wear
— Leisure Classics, available
in black, red, blue and green.
Water resistant to 100 feet.

Citizen Chuck

Public Enemy No. 1's plan to bring the noise to another level

"If KRS-One calls himself the God of Hip Hop, then I'm Moses. And Moses is coming off the mountain with a spray gun," says Chuck D of his multimedia blueprint for the coming year. While Public Enemy take an extended hiatus, Chuck shows no signs of slowing down. First up are two hip hop television shows: *Rap Live With Chuck D*, which promises to be a one-on-one, *Larry King Live*-style talkshow, and *Inside the Rhymer*, a newsmagazine that he calls a "com-

bination of *NBA Inside Stuff*, *WWF Wrestling*, and *Entertainment Tonight*."

While shopping his shows to the networks—he plans to host and produce both—Chuck has initiated part two of his master plan: starting Slam Jamz Records through Sony Music while simultaneously working on two books, an autobiography and a retrospective of his years with Public Enemy. "I'm gonna do for hip hop what Don Cornelius did for black music and Alan Freed did for rock 'n' roll," he says. "I'm running for commissioner of this shit. Hip hop is gonna be interpreted through a structure that I'm building." If you thought PE were sitting out the '90s, don't believe the hype.

Omoronke Idowu



Chuck D

bullets point-blank news.....



HEAVYWEIGHT TITLE

The vacancy created by Andre Harrell's move to Motown was still unfilled at press time, but that didn't stop Heavy D from laying claim to Harrell's old job at Uptown Records. "You can say that I'm expected to become president and CEO [of Uptown]," he said in early October, predicting he would sign a contract imminently. A label spokesperson, however, refused comment, stating, "We do not confirm rumors." Meanwhile, the Overweight Lover is appearing in an off-Broadway play, *Riff Raff*, with Laurence Fishburne.



THE ETERNAL WEPT

Jarrett Cordes (a.k.a. J.C. the Eternal), the nonsinging half of P.M. Dawn, was arrested in mid-September for sexually assaulting his 14-year-old cousin. According to New Jersey police, Cordes had consensual sex with the young girl several times. Police charged Cordes, 24, with first-degree aggravated sexual assault and child abuse, two weeks after the girl's mother learned about the affair. P.M. Dawn toured Europe after Cordes posted \$10,000 bail—and was ordered to stay clear of his cousin. If convicted, Cordes could face as much as 20 years in prison.

adidas Sport Watch

Tony's Sports, Chicago

Or for a retailer near you, call

1-800-509-2955



d

No matter what your sport we've got your watch. The adidas Soccer Series, three colors with arched graphics of the Quatrefoil on a stainless steel face.

a

The Adventure Collection. It takes you from the office to center court to 330 feet under water.

s

Equipment quality and value. Designed to hold up under the rigors of the rugged outdoors. Solid stainless steel, water resistant to 330 feet.

adidas
SPORT WATCH

adidas Sport Watches are manufactured and distributed under license from adidas AG.

Copyright © 1995 A. & S. Company

OFF THE HEAD
FreeStyle
flow.

OBEY
your
MIND



OBEY your thirst

©1995 The Coca-Cola Company. "Sprite" and "Obey Your Thirst" are trademarks of The Coca-Cola Company.

Sprite Music Poll

Sprite thanks you for your support all year, but before we ring in the New Year, shout out your fave picks for 1995!
Call 1-718-789-8984 to recognize the best in Rap and R&B.

You will be charged for a regular telephone call into the (718) Brooklyn, NY area code.

PROBLEMS? QUESTIONS? Call Music Access at 1.718.398.2146. Lines active until January 5th.

RAP

Rap Single of the Year

Flava in Your Ear - Craig Mack
I'll Be There...You're All I Need... - Method Man/Mary J. Blige
One More Chance - The Notorious B.I.G.
Keep Their Heads Ringin' - Dr. Dre

Rap Album of the Year

Ready to Die - The Notorious B.I.G.
Tical - Method Man
The Infamous - Mobb Deep
E. 1999 Eternal - Bone Thugs-N-Harmony

Best New Group

Mobb Deep
Junior M.A.F.I.A.
Lost Boyz
Luniz

Best New Male Artist

The Notorious B.I.G.
Skee-Lo
L.V.
Shaggy

Best New Female Artist

LinQus
Dix-N-Dat
Heather B.
Smooth

Male Artist or Group of the Year

The Notorious B.I.G.
Method Man
Red Man
Dr. Dre

Female Artist or Group of the Year

Da Brat
Lady Rage
Queen Latifah
Nefertiti

Best Up and Coming Artist or Group

The Roots
AZ
Common Sense
Questionmark Asylum

R&B

R&B Single of the Year

This Is How We Do It - Montell Jordan
Creep - TLC
Don't Take It Personal (Just One Of Dem Days) - Monica
Best Friend - Brandy

R&B Album of the Year

Brandy - Brandy
My Life - Mary J. Blige
CrazySexyCool - TLC
II - Boyz II Men

Best New Group

Soul For Real
Brownstone
Groove Theory
Blackstreet

Best New Male Artist

D'Angelo
Montell Jordan
Usher
Jon B.

Best New Female Artist

Faith
Monica
Brandy
Jaya

Male Artist or Group of the Year

Montell Jordan
Barry White
Boyz II Men
Jodeci

Female Artist or Group of the Year

Mary J. Blige
Des'ree
Brandy
TLC

Best Up and Coming Artist or Group

Michael Speaks
Deborah Cox
McKenzie
Solo

Best Movie Soundtrack

Friday
Panther
New Jersey Drive
Dangerous Minds

Collaboration of the Year

I'll Be There...You're All I Need... - Method Man/Mary J. Blige
I Wanna Be Down (remix) - Brandy/Queen Latifah/MC Lyte/Yo Yo
Can't You See - Total/The Notorious B.I.G.
How High - Red Man/Method Man

OFF THE HEAD

FreeStyle
flow.

OBEY
YOUR
THIRST





Bobbito Garcia plays the tracks; Raekwon states the facts

Back in 1992, Stretch Armstrong and I had the pleasure of hosting the first radio show to play Wu-Tang Clan's first single (released on Wu-Tang Records), "Protect Ya Neck." Months later they got picked up for major distribution, and the rest is history. Although Raekwon and I hadn't seen each other in three years, the first thing he said to me before our Sound Check was "Good lookin' out for supporting us early on." Considering that his album is among the best in hip-hop, I'm glad to see he's remained well-grounded.

• KOOL G RAP (FEATURING NAS)—"Fast Life"

R: Mmmmh! You know I keep my ear to the street! "Green papers with eagles..."

B: I can't stand the singing.

R: I don't like it all too much either, but I can respect it. Everyone think they know how to sing, anyway when their favorite record comes on.

B: I just want to hear his rhymes. But if the singing helps him sell, I guess it's all right 'cause he deserves to go gold.

R: That's what it's all about.

• PEDRO INFANTE—"Tú, Solo Tú," *Mi Familia* soundtrack

R: I'd play this for one of my better pecans. She would respect it, and I could put up with it.

B: I can't fuck with salsa or merengue, but

I love some slow Latin jazz or a Spanish ballad like this.

R: It's smooth, it's not hurting nobody. I roll with a lot of Puerto Ricans, so I've heard stuff like this.

B: Good looking on the shout-outs to us on your records.

R: My first man was Puerto Rican—I got love for them. You see how I be trying to say little Spanish in my rhymes. We all together. Y'all are minorities just like us.

• DONNA SUMMER—"Love to Love You Baby"

R: Who's this?

B: Donna Summer.

R: You gotta be with a 33-year-old woman or just caught up in her chamber to listen to this.

B: That's a fucking song. She sounds like she's laying on the side of her bed with some nigga. It's phat. She's a freaky chick, she ain't frowning!

B: She's the predecessor to Adina Howard.

• NATALIE MERCHANT—"Carnival"

R: Who the fuck is this?

B: Natalie Merchant.

R: Who is she, an old man?

B: You don't like this?

R: Hell no, this is for them suit-and-tie niggas. That's what they rock on Wall Street.

B: You don't like the beat, the bass line, nothing?

R: It ain't me. I respect her style, that's her chamber.

B: What if one of your butter pecans asked you to play that for her?

R: I'd tell her to get the fuck out of here. It's almost like she's in the Sade chamber, but she ain't killing it like her.

• C69 BOYZ FEATURING 24K—"Teenie Weenie"

B: I wish I could videotape your facial expression right now. You look pretty disgusted.

R: That's guido music, dudes wearing leather suits and leather jackets.

B: It's real popular in Miami. What do you think about the rhymes?

R: [Doesn't respond]

B: I guess you don't like it.

R: No comment at all.

• CROOKLYN DOGGERS '95 (CHUBB ROCK, O.C., AND JERU THE DAMAJA)—"Return of the Crooklyn Dodgers"

R: You know that's my shit. I love Chubb on this.

B: He always goes off on posse cuts.

R: He got a sword. All of them killed it, that shit was making the movie night.

B: If you could do a posse cut with anyone, who would you do it with?

R: Rakim and Slick Rick. I'd have to shine ridiculously on that one.

One nation under a groove?



Clinton Plans To Lift Funk Out of 'Funk'

By TODD L. PURDUM
WASHINGTON, Sept. 23—President Clinton, who has often talked about being a "hip hop" guy, says that in the first round of his campaign he will talk about "funk."

Clinton, who has often talked about being a "hip hop" guy, says that in the first round of his campaign he will talk about "funk." Clinton, who has often talked about being a "hip hop" guy, says that in the first round of his campaign he will talk about "funk." Clinton, who has often talked about being a "hip hop" guy, says that in the first round of his campaign he will talk about "funk."

New York Times, September 24 and 26, 1995

bullets point-blank news

ANYBODY SEEN THE GENERALS?

On September 12 in Vienna, a squad of ex-pros ended the Harlem Globetrotters' 24-year, 8,829-game winning streak. In the third game of their Ultimate Challenge tour, the Trotters fell to the Abdul-Jabbar All-Stars 91-85, with Kareem himself contributing 34 points. "One of our goals is to be put on the short list of the best basketball teams in the world," said Globetrotters chairman and owner Mammie Jackson optimistically. "We look at this loss as one building block to getting back on that list."



I WOULD DIE 4 U

"Prince is dead! Worms crawling in and out of his skull!" At least, that's what San Francisco radio station KYLD—and a wanted listeners to believe. Morning DJs J.V. and Elvis pronounced Prince dead during their broadcast September 21, but when frantic listeners from across the country phoned the station, the DJs confessed that they were kidding. "Prince's management company told me to do it, so I did it," Elvis told his listeners. Is it really that desperate for publicity? Neither his label, Warner Bros., nor his management, Paisley Park, would comment.



In the MIX

Oh My God!

1. The recently married Craig Mack and his wife, Roxanne, at the platinum party for the 69 Boyz in Orlando. 2. Jazz singer Cassandra Wilson does her thing at Central Park's Summerstage. 3. Treach has a little trouble controlling his cute little float in Kay Gee's pool. 4. At the video shoot for Jodeci's "Love U 4 Life," K-Ci and Mary J. Blige don't look too happy about being caught on-camera. (5.) Is it real or is it Memorex? Rev. Run (who's not in costume) with T-Boz and Dalvin in their outfits for the video. (6.) Guess the food on the set isn't all that great. On Day Two of the shoot, T-Boz keeps running to the deli between takes. 7. At the party following the MTV Video Music Awards at N.Y.C.'s Motown Cafe, Angela Bassett and Wesley Snipes can't keep their hands off each other. (8.) The legendary Dr. J and the woman behind DKNY, Donna Karan, are also on hand for the celebration. 9. Even in a big ol' shiny outfit, Barry White is still the Man. 10. New York Undercover's Malik Yoba and Onyx's Fredro (who now likes to be called Never) say they're starting a club for bald-headed black men across the world. 11. Yeah, yeah, yeah, freak like me. Guess Adina doesn't realize we got it already. 12. MC Lyte needs her fingers to count at a performance in Jackson, Miss. 13. Jamiroquai, the Space Cowboy, signing albums at N.Y.C.'s Tower Records. 14. Did anyone ever tell Shock G that it's impolite to chew while posing? 15. Is this how Too Short phones home? As large as he is, you'd think he'd have a cellular. 16. Zhané walk the runway for a celebrity fashion show at N.Y.C.'s Parsons School of Design. The show also included appearances by Full Force, Vicious, Channel Live, and Kangel from UTFO. 17. Ice Cube performs a concert in memory of Eazy-E in Atlanta.

Mimi Valdes



start

In the MIX too Big Up!

start

1. The fabulous Toukie Smith and this year's Seagram's Gin Electrifying Lady finalists. Wonder if they got to eat at Toukie's restaurant for free? 2. Julia Roberts and Spike Lee at the N.Y.C. premiere for *Something to Talk About*. 3. Keith Sweat and his protégées Kut Klose at Planet Hollywood in Atlanta. 4. Is this how Faith spends her day? Blondes really do have more fun, huh? 5. Dancehall queen Patra in the middle of her striptease. No word on whether she took it all off—but knowing Patra, she probably did. 6. OutKast's Big Boi gets ready to go for his while bowling in Atlanta. 7. Would you believe that D'Angelo, who's got everyone open on his "Brown Sugar," was signed for more than three years before his album got released? 8. SWV finishing up work on their new album with Babyface. 9. Guy working on their long-awaited reunion album, due in early '96. Let's hope it meets everyone's expectations. 10. Orlando Magic stars Anfernee Hardaway and Dennis Scott do the solidarity brother handshake on a crowded N.Y.C. street. 11. Sugarfoot of the Ohio Players and Rosie Perez bond at the JVC Jazz Festival in N.Y.C. 12. B-Real, Coolio, and Sen Dog take time out to go on a hiking trip through the mountains. 13. Raekwon debates whether he wants some Buffalo wings or if he'll just go home and use those chef skills to whip up some food. 14. Xscape don't feel so good about their plane delay at the Atlanta airport. 15. Outside the *Soul Train* Lady of Soul Awards, Dr. Dre chills with the Santa Monica welcoming committee.

M.V.



JUST ADD BACARDI



Bacardi rum. Made in Puerto Rico. BACARDI THE BAT DEVICE, AND THE SILVER DEVICE ARE REGISTERED TRADEMARKS OF BACARDI & COMPANY LIMITED. ©1998 BACARDI IMPORTERS, INC. MIAMI, FL. 40% ALC. BY VOL.



Jazz, Jobs, and Creative Moments

Alexa Birdsong has a great name. You hear it and expect a cold diva or *Dynasty* bitch to appear, the ground trembling in her wake. Our Miss Birdsong is neither of those things, though much of her professional life finds her working with women who are all that and more. Do names like Aretha Franklin, Chaka Khan, Abbey Lincoln, and Nancy Wilson ring a bell? How about Gladys Knight, Betty Carter, Cassandra Wilson, and Ruth Brown? While we're at it, let's not forget the menfolk like Miles Davis, B.B. King, Randy Weston, Wynton Marsalis. The deal with our Miss Birdsong is that she's a concert producer for some of the nation's most prestigious jazz and blues festivals. Beyond perpetuating the culture, she would also like to get the message across that she's makin' mad loot.

"One thing I definitely want to say is that there are jobs in jazz for black people," Birdsong says. "There are jobs, and there is money to be made in jazz. The folks in the business have us thinking there is no money in this. I quit a job at Lincoln Center making a lot of money to go on my own, and I am making more money now. I get up when I want to, I go where I want to, and I am completely in control of my schedule."

Raised in Queens, Birdsong refers to herself as "that rarity in the arts—a successful native New Yorker." She sang as a child, but decided that in a world of "500 million other black women who also sang," she'd have to make her mark in some other way. She began producing events at Mount Holyoke College in the early '80s, and went on to work with JVC Jazz Festival producer George Wein before going to Lincoln Center in 1990.

Birdsong caught my interest, though, not for her entrepreneurship but for her reafterthought. She has a bottomless reservoir of choice stories to tell about artists we like to think of as family but who are in fact figures of mystery.

Take Aretha Franklin. "I did a show with

'Re in New Orleans,' Birdsong recalls. "It's sound check time, the band is already onstage rehearsing, and 'Re gets out of the car wearing pink Bermuda shorts, pink house shoes, a pink Chanel handbag, and pink windbreaker. She just grooves up onto the stage and proceeds to run the rehearsal, because she's her own music director. They run through a few charts, and she says, 'Now we gonna do 'Respect.'"' They start,

and unglamorous essentials of production, Birdsong brings finesse to the task of handling "difficult" artists. "Once I yanked Miles Davis offstage. We were in a union house and we were going overtime and I yanked him. He was fun to work with, though, watching him be who he was. He loved his clothes. I'd go to talk to him about something heavy, like, 'Miles, I just read James Baldwin's last in-

about endurance and longevity she's learned from these women who've survived and overcome in a rough game, Birdsong sounds a wistful, tragic note. "All of that came up when the Phyllis Hyman thing came down," she replies. "I was producing the *Essence* Lounge for the *Essence* Music Festival, and I had all women performers: Angela Bofill, Cassandra Wilson, the Dixie Cups, Denise

LaSalle, Bobbi Humphrey. Phyllis passed the day the festival began. It was heavy to do that festival and have Phyllis go out. And at the same time.

"In talking to people about Phyllis, they were really upset and then gradually they got angry because they'd all gone through that—those dark, depressing, I-can't-take-it-anymore-I'm-lonely-I'm not-making-no-money-I'm singing-my-ass-off-but-no-body-cares periods. They have all faced it. They were disappointed because she didn't endure. They saw themselves in her, and they knew exactly where she'd been beforehand. And it was very scary."

Though Birdsong works in a business where the artists are predominantly black and the people behind the scenes are predominantly white and male, she believes she's learned as much about the business from the performers as from the suits. "What the performers have taught me is respect—how to get it and how to give it," she says. "They made me realize that it's important to be clear about what you need in order to do what you got to do. So I'm very methodical about what I do. You can't be too casual, but you can't be too hyper either, because neither will make for a creative moment."



IN THE KEY OF LIFE
"What the performers have taught me," says producer Alexa Birdsong (with Randy Weston), "is respect—how to get it and how to give it."

and she goes, 'Hold it, hold it, hold it. Have y'all heard my record? Because that's not the groove. The groove is much more in the pocket than that.' To see an artist like her be that much in control of her sound is really some stuff. She gets paid in advance, and you will sit there counting out all that money with her for an hour. And she counts it twice. She calls it the old Detroit two-count. There's no manager, it's just 'Re, somebody to dress her, and two security guards. That's it. She just kinda shows up and throws down."

Beyond her skills at managing the rude

interview, and he talks about you in it, man. What do you think? And he'd be, like, 'You see my jacket? My friend in Tokyo made it. Touch it.' So I'd touch the jacket, and it would change colors. Since you got to deal with people where they're at, I'd say, 'Yeah, Miles, you look cute.'"

Birdsong loves seeing younger artists like Wynton Marsalis and Cassandra Wilson work and grow. But she's also had the opportunity to see veteran artists like Aretha, Abbey Lincoln, and her lifelong favorite Nancy Wilson "kick it up a notch when they want to." Asked what lessons

Black-Owned
.....
By
Greg Tate

PUT OUR JEANS ON

GAP
DENIM

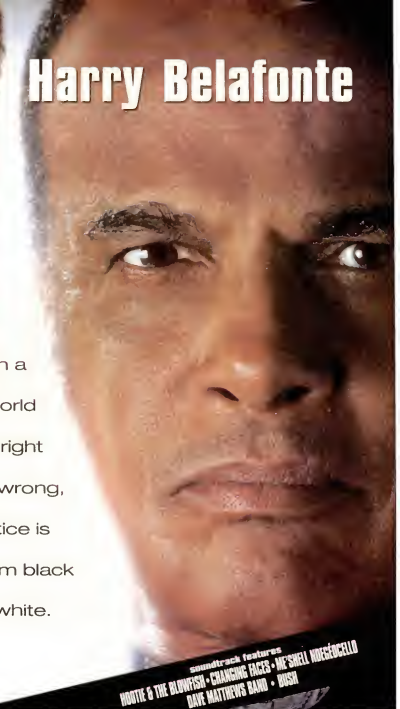
For the nearest Gap store,
call 1-800-GAP-STYLE.

©1995 Gap Inc. All rights reserved.



John Travolta

In
w
of
and v
just
seldo
or v



Harry Belafonte

n a
 world
 right
 wrong,
 ice is
 m black
 white.

soundtrack features
 ROUTE 66 THE BLUESFISH • CHANGING FACES • MC SHELL NUGGETCELLO
 DAVE MATTHEWS BAND • BUSH

In a
world
of right
and wrong,
justice is
seldom black
or white.

soundtrack features
WOOTIE & THE BLUENISH • CHANGING FACES • M'SHELL MONSIEUR
DAVE MATTHEWS BAND • DUSH

WHITE MAN'S BURDEN

UGC Presents An American With RYSHER ENTERTAINMENT A LAWRENCE BENDER PRODUCTION A DESMOND NAKANO FILM JOHN TRAVOLTA HARRY BELAFONTE
"WHITE MAN'S BURDEN" TOM BOWER MARGARET AVERY AND KELLY LYNCH MUSIC BY ISIS MUSSENDEN COSTUME DESIGNER HAPPY WALTERS EDITOR HOWARD SHORE
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS NANCY RICHARDSON PRODUCED BY NAOMI SHOHAN WRITTEN BY WILLY KURANT DIRECTED BY JOANN FREGALETTE JANSEN EXECUTIVE PRODUCER PAUL HELLERMAN
 YVES MARIMON UGC

COMING SOON

the best affirmative action? your vote

By Farai Chideya

It's the year 2015. A third of all young Americans are black, Latino, or Asian. There are more immigrants in the nation than any time since World War II. Politicians running for office use immigration and race as wedge issues, relying on fears about the country's economic future to deepen rifts in an already divided electorate.

All of the above is true, except the year is 1995. If the early speeches are any indication, the 1996 presidential campaign promises to be full of bitter debates, and no topic is more controversial than affirmative action. Yet with forces aligning to support what they see as equal employment or destroyed what they see as reverse discrimination, one group has remained silent: young Americans. If you've been watching from the sidelines, you can't afford to. Whether you love affirmative action, hate it, or don't understand it, you're going to inherit the America that today's battles are shaping, one that will either try to embrace the dream of equality or give it up as a lost cause. The first way to prepare yourself for those battles is to learn what affirmative action is—and isn't.

The Top Five Myths About Affirmative Action:

1. "It's a black thang." No liberal plot, affirmative action was first widely promoted by President Nixon in 1969 and applies to *all* groups that have experienced continuing discrimination, including women and people of color. But opponents have a clear stake in making it out to be just a black issue. In a recent *USA Today* poll, more respondents favored affirmative action for women than opposed it. The reverse was true when the question was asked about African-Americans.

2. "It's all about quotas." One reason affirmative action is so confusing is that it has never been one uniform program. There are many different types, from noncontroversial recruiting efforts to set-asides (which make sure a percentage of government business goes to firms owned by women or people of color, and which opponents decry as quotas). While set-asides are controversial and some have been struck down by recent legislation, very few of these programs are based on quotas.

3. "It's about past discrimination." The executive order that created affirmative action called it a way to remedy "past discrimination perpetuated in present systems" [emphasis added]. If racial discrimination was a thing of the past, we could all just shake hands and go on our way. But it isn't. At every level, African-Americans and other people of color earn significantly less wages than white males with the same education and qualifications. For example, black male lawyers between the ages of 35 and 45 make only 79

cents for every dollar their white counterparts make.

4. "It promotes unqualified workers and widespread reverse discrimination." A sample of more than 3,000 discrimination cases from 1990 to 1994 found fewer than 100 that pertained to reverse discrimination, and only six of those were decided in favor of people claiming reverse discrimination. That's hardly an epidemic. As for affirmative action promoting unqualified people of color, a 1990 study by the Urban Institute that sent black and white "testers" with equal qualifications to apply for jobs found that the African-American applicants were 20 percent less likely to get the position they were qualified for.



1957: An early attempt at integration, Little Rock Central High

5. "Affirmative action is the problem" or "...the solution." The biggest myth of all is that affirmative action is either the chief cause of racial injustice in our society or the best solution for it. Republican California governor Pete Wilson said that programs like affirmative action infect America with "the deadly virus of tribalism," language that even some members of his own party criticized as racially loaded. Members of the black community, meanwhile, have equated the end of affirmative action with slavery. Neither side is right. Saying that affirmative action, not long-term racial injustice, is tearing this country apart is stupid. Saying the black community can't survive without affirmative action is even more stupid.

America is poised to enter a millennium where the majority of the population will be people of color. For now, affirmative action is one of the few proven ways to promote equality. (The black middle class has only grown when there's been strong support for the program.) American politics has always worked on the principle of "Divide and conquer." This generation—our generation—has a choice. We can either follow the politicians who tell us the only way to succeed is to fight one another, or we can try to find ways to make equality for all lead to prosperity for all.

Here's what some VIBE readers had to say about affirmative action:

"One of the things that society is run by humans, with human flaws, we have to ensure that there are programs in place equal opportunity where normally there are none. When human beings become perfect, then we won't need these programs."

"Those individuals always looking for a special excuse will always find one. Those seeking recognition for merit and skill will, equally, always shine."

"I received a scholarship due to affirmative action, and I would do it again and again. The same way a white student benefits from a university legacy set up for their forefathers is the same way I can benefit from affirmative action."

"Affirmative action gives the notion that success is in the hands of the oppressors. No one holds the keys to success except for oneself. The American dream trail will only bring unfulfilled dreams and visions and eventually greater bondage."

"I believe there are white people who feel they suffer as a result of affirmative action. But as a black woman who has watched her grandmother scrub floors, I can't really be concerned that their feelings are hurt. I'm using whatever program I have to use to get my foot in the door."

"The real problem lies within the American educational system. Until the government allocates more money to public schools, there will always be problems. But that will not happen, because the breakdown of public schooling helps them gain what they want in the end: genocide."

HEY, Y'ALL! YOU SLEEP, YOU WEEP! Call VIBE's GET UP ON IT Hot Line, 212-563-VIBE, and let your voice be heard. What issues matter most to you? Who do you want to hear from in this space? What's going on in your part of the country? There is no fee for this call; only normal long-distance charges apply in the continental U.S. Press 5 to repeat question. Any other questions? Call 800-647-TUNE for more info. Services provided by TouchTunes Interactive™. If you are plugged in to the Internet, check out the Get Up On It page on VIBEonline's Web site, <http://www.vibe.com>. **Feel the VIBE and GET UP ON IT!**

GET UP ON IT

VIBE 63



THE IRONY SCUBA COLLECTION



swatch+
IRONY
S W I S S M A D E

MARSHALL FIELD'S • ROBINSONS • MAY • DILLARD'S
WATCH WORLD, NYC • MARTINIQUE, NYC

representative maxine waters diva in the house

By nonda blankson-sock

At 57, Representative Maxine Waters is light on her feet and quick to the punch. Since moving to California in 1961, she's served 14 years in the state assembly and is now in her fifth year in Congress, representing the 35th Congressional District, which includes much of South-Central. She's seen three decades of struggle—from the Panthers to the Watts riots, all the way up to the '90s uprising—and she made history by crashing President Bush's all-white post-9/11 strategy session. Waters is also cochair of the Congressional Black Caucus's Task Force on Affirmative Action, whose funding was recently cut by Newt Gingrich's downsizing. She freely refers to Republicans as "the enemy" and insisted at the '02 Democratic Convention that "this is the last time I support an all-white anything." On Capitol Hill, her super step amid congregations of stern white men is fun to watch. As House Majority Leader Dick Armey recently exclaimed at the sight of this grandmother in a pair of black suede knee-highs, "You are bad in those boots!"

Some people say the social awareness of the '90s is like a rebirth of the '60s. What's your take on that?

I wish we had some '60s organizing energy, I really do. The Panthers were smart; they were politically astute. They were organized, and they weren't afraid of anybody. Do I see that in young people now? No. I see anger, which is fine. I've said many times that if you're African-American in America and you're not angry, something is wrong. But we're not acting on that anger. Black people who fear that they'll be criticized because they're angry must take a look at how white anger is being glorified. Newt Gingrich says it's a revolution. Do you understand what would happen if Jesse and I got on TV and said we're starting a revolution? The CIA would surround us in a matter of days, and we'd be locked up someplace.

What's your feeling about the current struggle around affirmative action?

Affirmative action is a wedge issue because it fans the insecurity of whites about their futures: Why can't I get ahead? Because of affirmative action. Why am I not wealthy? You're paying all your money to welfare recipients. When Dole assessed affirmative action in government, all he found was language about goals and timetables and outreach—no quotas. So I don't know what they want to dismantle. Ninety percent of America is still in the hands of white males.

But I do believe that the resistance we're putting up is having some effect. We forced the president to adopt a stronger position in favor of affirmative action; we slowed down the rush to dismantle it in Congress. We're not out of danger, though. Cuts in welfare, Medicare, Medicaid, and education are all going to take place. The only way to correct it is to register and vote and get rid of public policy makers that are wreaking this pain.

Your district only had a 30 percent turnout in the last election.

My highest priority is to encourage and organize voters. But it's not that people need to be told to go vote. We do that all the time. Even though I'd like people to vote in large numbers, I understand why they aren't participating. If you're living in a housing project that's roach-infested, rat-infested, and

REPRESENTING
The congresswoman presides over her Young, Gifted, and Black conference.



guns are going off around you, I'm not so sure that you think a vote is going to change your life.

You work closely with your constituents on a grassroots level. Do you feel that they're going to suffer greatly in the coming years?

There will be a lot of pain, not just for my constituents, but for a lot of Americans. Many people who are saying they support the Contract With America don't know they're going to be hurt by it. With this constitutional amendment to balance the budget by 2003, almost everything will get cut. It's going to be a rude awakening if they have their way.

What do you think about the notion of black Republicans?

I have a difficult time understanding black Republicans; it seems such a contradiction to me. If they truly are Republicans, in particular conservative Republicans, I just see them as the enemy. It's not more acceptable to me because they're black; it is less acceptable to me because they're black.

You often walk into meetings where you are the only

black woman present—does that discourage you in any way?

Not for one minute. People tend to think because whites are in the majority that they must know more, but they don't. They're not smarter, more energetic, or more principled—so, no. Those of us who are there have got to push up, speak up, make something happen. It doesn't happen at any one meeting. You have to keep nudging on and on ad nauseum.

Are you concerned about the future of the Congressional Black Caucus?

I would like to see the Caucus working closer with younger people. That's one of the reasons I put such emphasis on the Young, Gifted, and Black program, to encourage dialogue with the hip-hop community.

I think rap makes many members of Congress uncomfortable. But any black leader that denounces young people they don't understand is doing a bad thing. Hip-hop is born of young people trying to show their dissatisfaction, to communicate with their parents and grandparents. It is not the kind of thing that needs to be shut up. It's the kind you listen to.

What was your initial impression of hip hop prior to carefully listening?

To tell you the truth, I've never been offended by it. The music industry didn't accept them, so they organized and did it themselves—I like that. For black people to be heard, they have to defy the conventional ways by which whites get listened to. Black elected officials need to know that. I rejoice in the defiance and boldness. There are some songs I don't care for, but that's not the point. The point is that because of freedom of speech, this country has had to hear this point of view.

How can black leaders get more connected with that point of view?

Before you make a decision because you saw a video where the dancing is provocative and some of the words are scary, sit down in the quiet of your house and listen to the words. See if there is something in there, even if you don't agree with the way it is said. Understand what Snoop Dogg says when he talks about not living another year or when Tupac says of his mom, "No matter if you're a dope fiend, you're still my African queen." When you see a Tupac, even when he is in his glory with his fans, and you say to him, "I heard what you said about your mom and I respect that"—you disarm them when you talk to them like that. They'll learn they don't have to shock us to get us to listen.

Reebok

<http://direct.reebok.com> ©1995 Reebok International, Ltd. All Rights Reserved. REEBOK and the Reebok logo are registered trademarks of Reebok International, Ltd.

YEAH,
SURE

YOU
WANT
TO
GET

IN
SOMEBODY'S
FACE

BUT
WHAT

YOU
GIVING
TO
DO

WHEN
YOU
GET
HARD

THE REEBOK® VOMMERANG. GOES EVERY

PLACE THEY'D RATHER YOU DIDN'T.

ANOTHER EXCUSE TO GET A LITTLE FACE-TIME WITH MANAGEMENT
ON PLANET REEBOK

Copyright ©1995 Reebok International, Ltd.

HIGH TECHNOLOGY
WITHOUT THE
HIGH ANXIETY

HOW TECHNICS 60-DISC CHANGER WILL CHANGE THE WAY YOU LISTEN TO MUSIC.



*Fly from a track on disc 1
all the way to a track on
disc 60.*

MASH

Brings out fine music of detail



*The remote even
controls Direct
Programming -
for one-touch*

*programming of your favorite
songs as you listen*

IMAGINE - YOU THINK OF A SONG,
PUSH A BUTTON, THE SONG PLAYS.

NO MORE SEARCHING FOR CDS.

IT'S THE NEW TECHNICS SL-MC50

MEGA CD CHANGER. IT HOLDS 60

CDS, OFFERS FRONT LOADING AND

QUICK SINGLE-PLAY FUNCTION.

TECHNICS MEGA CD CHANGER.

IT'S A CHANGE FOR THE BETTER.

Tuner
Amplifier
Equalizer
60-Disc Changer
Tape Deck

*No larger
than a
standard
component,
it
easily fits
into your
system*

*Group your discs
according to musical
genre, artist or any
way you like*

R & B
Waltz
Country

ROCK
JAZZ

Technics
The science of sound

Technics developed the world's first MASH
Super Disc. MASH technology was awarded by
NET (U.S. Patent). MASH is a trademark of NET.

Proud Sponsor of the
1996 U.S. Olympic Team



SOCIETY OF SOUL
Music from the heart

NEXT
PEOPLE ON THE VERGE



Big Rube, Rico, Espranza, Ray, and Sleepy Brown

SOUNDING LIKE THE LOST SOUND-track to a '70s mack daddy cinematic saga (think of Superfly rollin' dice and Willie Dynamite dressed in fly fur), *Society of Soul's* debut disc, *Brainchild*, is a weeded, laid-back funk attack. With a smoky sound reminiscent of the boxcars that once roared down the gritty *Soul Train* tracks, *Society of Soul* (Sleepy Brown, Big Rube, Rico, Ray, and the lone diva Espranza) try to keep their music skintight. "It's still a hip hop album," says Big Rube in a dank drawl. "It's just that we're doin'

things differently."

Recorded in the basement of producer Rico (a sound lab known as the Dungeon) and, among other places, at CurTom Studios (owned by Curtis Mayfield), *Brainchild* is a plea to the black community. "We're trying to feed good soul food to the minds of the youth, trying to send out positive vibes," explains Big Rube. The group's first single, "Pushin'," is an example of that sentiment. As a part of the Atlanta collective that also includes producers Organized Noize and artists OutKast

and the Goodie MoB, the *Society of Soul* sound is best described as "music from the heart," says lead singer Sleepy Brown, whose father was once a member of '70s disco jazz group Brick.

Although *Brainchild's* subjects range from pot anthems like "Peaches n' Erb" to the sweet sexiness of "E.M.B.R.A.C.E.," it's the gospel-flavored vocals on "It Only Gets Better" in which Espranza's voice becomes supremely spiritual. "I was raised in my grandparents' church in South Carolina," she says, smiling

broadly. "I remember the first time I ever sang there, I was about three years old. I didn't sound like a lil' kid, more like a lil' woman. People started screaming, crying, and praying."

Most of the songs were already written by the time Espranza joined the group, but she has started writing tracks for her own future projects. "We're kinda modeling the group like the Wu-Tang fellas do, so it'll be cool for us to work on other things," says Sleepy Brown. "But we'll still keep it in the family."

Michael A. Gonzales

A man with dark hair, wearing dark sunglasses and a blue button-down shirt, is looking down and slightly to his left. He is outdoors, with a blurred background of what appears to be a railing and some foliage. The lighting is bright, suggesting daylight.

NEXT

RBX
Going A.W.O.L.

THE WORLD OF LOS ANGELES reality rap has always been a hotbed of dispute—especially the infamous Ruthless vs. Death Row battles. Now the public dismissals have come full circle, with—once again—Dr. Dre in the middle of it all.

Former Dogg Pound affiliate RBX tactfully reams Dre and his cronies (including his own cousin, Snoop Dogg) in his first single, "A.W.O.L." "I was getting the runaround," says X about his fight to get his Death Row solo project off the ground, not to mention getting paid for prior work on *The Chronic* and *Doggystyle*. "When we first started, Dre said it was gonna be a fair thing," says the towering, six-foot-four Long Beach native. "But when it was time for me to go, he said 'I-ight,' then—behind my back—told my lawyers, 'X ain't going nowhere!'"

What followed, according to RBX (whose initials stand for Reality Born Unknown), was an endless battle to get Dre's signature of release. In a final attempt, RBX solicited the help of his ol' college football teammate, Suge Knight (also CEO of Death Row Records). "Suge made one call, and an hour later Dre got vetoed!" (A spokesman for Death Row refused to comment.)

On his debut, *RBX Files*, X's lyrical targets extend beyond his beefs with Death Row. As far as he's concerned, there are more pressing issues at hand, like the plight of his brothers and sisters trying to survive. A devout Muslim for more than seven years, X, 28, prefers using his airtime on the microphone to educate and uplift the masses, especially the younger generation.

"I don't carry myself in a satanic style or talk about my sisters in a derogatory manner. I try to present my material in a more original, educated-black-man type of aspect," he says. "As a man that has knowledge, it is my duty to civilize the uncivilized. It's a continuous struggle, but until everybody I meet has respect for one another as brothers and sisters, my job is not done." *Tracil McGregor*

Who says smokers and nonsmokers can't party together?
For Benson & Hedges 100's, let's rise to the occasion.



BENSON & HEDGES 100's



THE LENGTH YOU GO TO FOR PLEASURE

**SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Quitting Smoking
Now Greatly Reduces Serious Risks to Your Health.**



Finally, a welcome sign for both smokers and nonsmokers.
Call 1-800-494-5444 for more information.

© Philip Morris Inc. 1995

5 mg "tar," 0.4 mg nicotine av. per cigarette by FTC method.



NEXT

PURE SOUL
Perfecting the formula

AFTER A WEST INDIAN LUNCH AND AN afternoon of autograph signing at Maryland's Landover Mall, Pure Soul—Shawn Allen, Heather Perkins, Keitha Shepherd, and Kirstin Hall—are backstage at the D.C. Armory, preparing for a concert. The performance is part of a step show following a football game of their alma mater, Howard University.

While everything is running smoothly for Keitha—the Washington, D.C.-based group's "big sister" and a former classical music teacher—one can't quite say the same for the others. Kirstin, the most dramatic of the bunch, can't find her makeup, and her portable curling iron is not doing the job. Heather's found a run in her pantyhose. And Shawn, the lead singer, is a big bag of nerves. But with two seconds left till show time, the girls run to the stage and break immediately into "We Must Be in Love." The Howard audience joins in...and the quartet kick ass.

They are—in the most classic and Whitney sense of the phrase—black girls. They bring aluminum-foil-wrapped lunches on the road and work those gospelized luv-ta-luv-ya vocals. "We Must Be in Love," the first single off their self-titled debut, has become one of the most frequently rotated songs on radio, BET, VH1, and the Box. It's also become the African-American wedding anthem of 1995. Now, let's be honest: Even with all its beauty, one can't say the song is especially innovative. Still, the single, the album, the group—just work. And with tracks produced by Teddy Riley, Foster and McElroy (the duo behind En Vogue), Kim Jordan, and Raphael Saddiq under their texturized harmony, these four really are Pure Soul.

Their harmonious work extends offstage as well. Much of their synchronicity, says Shawn, is due to communication. "Yeah, we pull our hair out, but we still love each other," she says. "Whenever there's a problem, we talk." And pray. "We really have to thank God," Kirstin adds. "He's always there for us. When we don't know how a situation is going to work out and we just want to throw our hands up, he just works it out." *Ipseleng Kgositsile*

Heather, Keitha, Kirstin, and Shawn

PHOTOGRAPH BY CHARLIE PIZZARELLO



Acupuncturists,
this Bud's for you.

BEENIE MAN

The wickedest slam

DAWN BREAKS OVER MONTEGO BAY, AND REGGAE SUMFEST '95 IS SMOKING.

The capacity crowd refuses to go home till an unmistakable cry rings out: "Ooooooh Gaaawwd!" That's when tall, dark Beenie Man strolls onstage in white pinstripes and bowler hat to ram the arena with hit upon hit: "Memories," "World Dance," "Big Up and Trust." No other DJ in Jamaica could close this show with such authority.

Besides pumping lyrical architectonics through his cordless mike, the rail-thin don keeps the crowd amped with an occasional Michael Jackson quickstep, a flip of his hat, or the dramatic removal of one of his tailored garments. When Beenie calls for his dancer, a cute six-year-old roughneck runs out and expertly executes the latest steps. "All girls!" Beenie beckons, his voice almost drowned out by female squeals. "Shock out and go crazy!" And they do.

"Jamaicans love young talent," says the artist, who first performed at age five and whose debut album was titled *The Invincible Beenie Man: Ten Year Old Boy Wonder*. Born Moses Davis, 21-year-old Beenie (which means "small") grew up surrounded by sound systems and sufferation in the Kingston ghetto of Waterhouse.

Even as "Slam"—the debut single from his first international release, *Blessed* (Island Jamaica)—ascends the *Billboard* charts, the superstar of the Shocking Vibes crew shows no signs of loafing. He voices a batch of Jamaican releases twice a week, and on days off, soundmen chase him down for dubplates. His rivalry with Bounty Killer (Beenie's only serious competitor for dancehall domination) has yielded enough wicked "counteraction" tunes to sustain any other career. But knowing how quickly champions can become memories, Beenie keeps "feeding the people with music."

Though sometimes prolific to the point of inconsistency (devoting one tune to God, the next to guns or girls), Beenie remains unapologetic. "You haffi DJ everything," he says. "Just make the people know you are for the girls, for the Rastaman, for the Christian, for the rude boy, for the police." The same police who shut down dances and lock up entertainers? "Yes, mon. You haffi make Babylon love you," he says matter-of-factly. "If they hate you, you dead." Rob Kenner

NEXT

Get yoUr Chill On.



© 2000 The Coca-Cola Company. "Coca-Cola" and "Always Real" are registered trademarks of The Coca-Cola Company.

Love Yourself In Passion...

FIND
YOURSELF IN...



NEW LIFE

THE NEW ALBUM FROM INTRO

The group who gave you the top ten hits "Come Inside,"
"Love Thang," and "Let Me Be The One" are reaching out
and reaching new heights on "New Life."

Featuring the new hit single **"Funny How Time Flies"**

produced by: Intro, Dave "Jam" Hall, and Nevelle Hodge

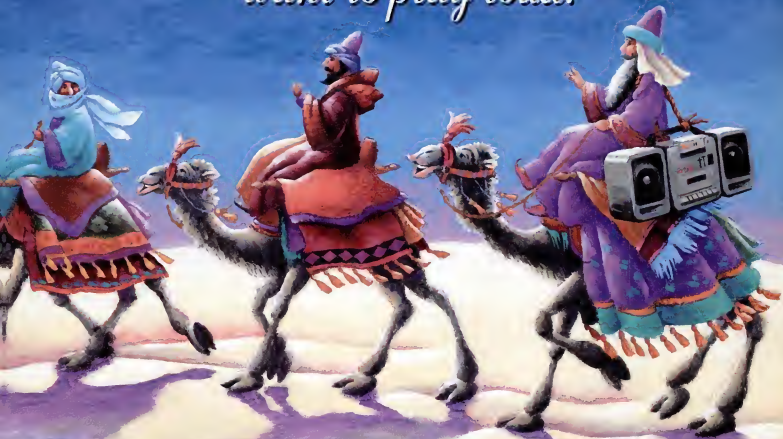


THE ATLANTIC GROUP
©1998 ATLANTIC RECORDING CORP.
A TIME WARNER COMPANY

THE RECORDING ARTISTS CALL 1-800-ATLANTIC FOR A QUOTE MUSIC TUNE-UP. ONLY \$1. PER CALL, UNDER 10 SET RECORDS' PERMISSION. RECORDING PHONE REQUIRED. ATLANTIC RECORDS, NY, NY 010300-4433

Talk to us: <http://www.atlantic-records.com>

Christmas music you'll want to play loud.



*Herb Alpert & Jeff Lorber • Dianne Reeves & Lou Rawls •
Fourplay • Diana Krall • Stanley Clarke, George Duke and Ecwete Harp
• Michael Franks • The Brecker Brothers with Steve Khan •*

*Tom Petty And The Heartbreakers • Randy Travis
• Luther Vandross • Frank Sinatra | Cyndi Lauper
• Boyz II Men • Jon Bon Jovi • Paul Young •
Aretha Franklin • Ronnie Spector | Darlene Love •*

*The Pointer Sisters • Eurythmics •
Whitney Houston • Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band
• The Pretenders • John Cougar Mellencamp •*



*Cassandra Wilson • Herbie Hancock and Eliane Elias •
John McLaughlin • Holly Cole • Steps Ahead • Anita Baker
• Chick Corea • Dave Koz • Dr. John*

*Michael Bolton • RUN D.M.C. • Extreme
• Bonnie Raitt and Charles Brown • Twix Campbell •
Debbie Gibson • Vanessa Williams • Ann & Nancy Wilson
• Wilson Phillips • Sinead O'Connor*

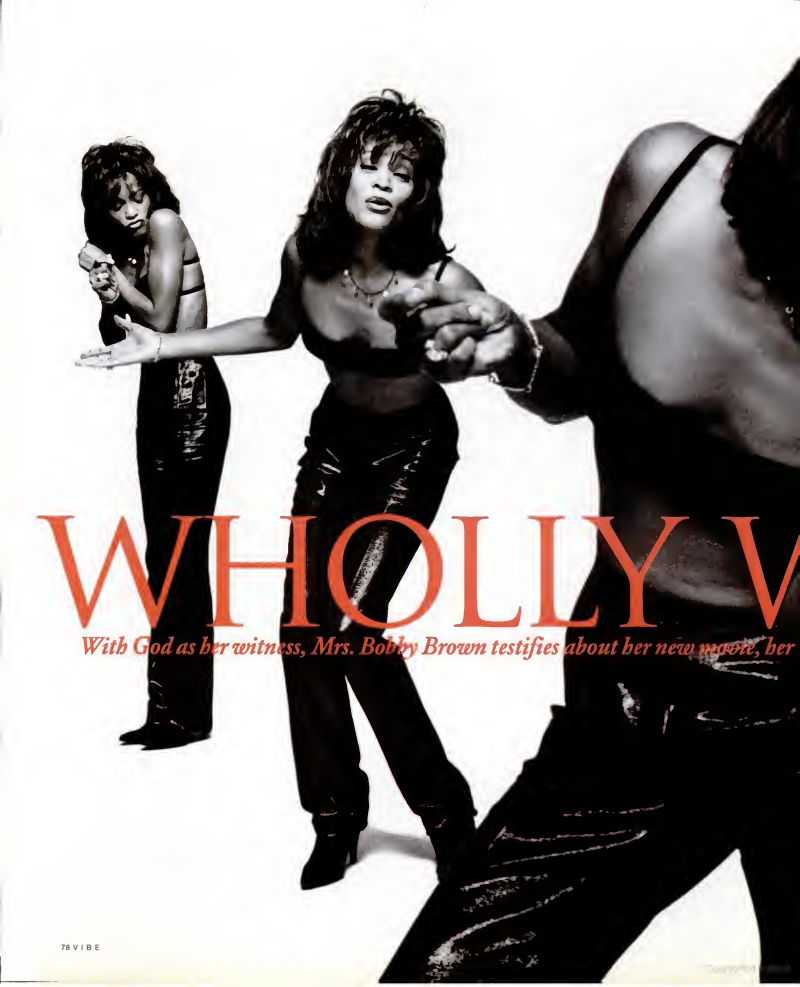
*Sting • RUN D.M.C. • U2 • Madonna •
Bob Seger & the Silver Bullet Band • Bryan Adams
• Bon Jovi • Alison Moyet • Stevie Nicks*

**SPRINGTIME MUSIC
BLUE NOTE**

© 1995 Special Olympics Productions

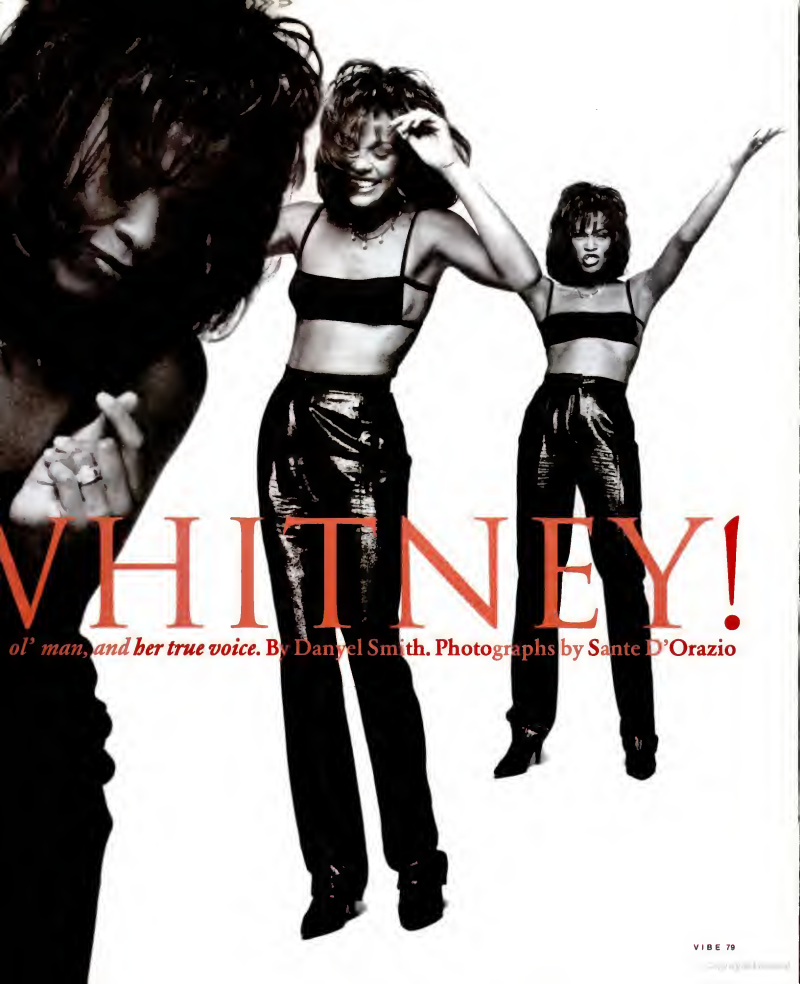
The Special Olympics Christmas Albums.





WHOLLY V

With God as her witness, Mrs. Bobby Brown testifies about her new mood, her



WHITNEY!

ol' man, and her true voice. By Danyel Smith. Photographs by Sante D'Orazio

Whitney Houston is home on a Friday night. Outside, purple gray skies are pouring down rain. She's sitting across from me in white stretch pants, which don't have to stretch because she's so slim. She looks pretty—unmade-up, hair slightly a mess, her ten thousand teeth occasionally organizing themselves into a huge smile.

"I have tried his love," says Houston, 32, looking me in my eyes, softly testifying. "I know his love is real." One of her legs is crossed under her; she's comfortable.

She seems quite upbeat actually, considering the gossip mill is churning out tidbits—again—about her and Bobby Brown breaking up. Two days before, a headline in a New York tabloid asked dumbly, is "Brown Bugging Marriage?" The column quoted Houston's husband of three years saying their marriage was over. But rumors of Whitney and Bobby's impending split have been circulating since their vows were exchanged. New Jersey middle-class Catholic schoolgirl turned model turned pop star marries Boston projects man-child/hip hop crooner. "I get tired of being talked about," Houston says wearily. "I really get tired of just constantly, in one form or another, hearing my name."

But right now, Houston's not talking about Bobby Brown. That will come later—through her talk about the importance of her new film, *Waiting to Exhale*, through her talk about her daughter, her will, her self. This talk of deep, unconditional love is not about her relationship with her husband.

"I'm happy just knowing that I have God in my life. I was raised on the Word, raised to practice it. It's about believing when you ain't got nothing to believe in." For Whitney, it's mostly about the Supreme Being to whom

that, while Houston was in Singapore, Brown was at a nightclub at Florida's Disney World. He was arrested for fighting with a man over a woman he was allegedly trying to pick up. He peed in the back of the police car and scratched the word FUCK into the car seat.

"Bobby and I are having marital problems," Houston acknowledges without anxiety, "and that's all I want to say about it." She's sitting not too far from an antique slot machine, and near it, there's a framed photo of her and Brown looking very '80s—Bobby with tracks cut into his hair, Whitney in a longish auburn Afro. Doing what appears to be the electric slide, they look incredibly happy. "We will work our problems out," she says simply. "Not we and the world."

Raised a Baptist, Whitney Houston sang publicly for the first time in the name of the Lord. She goes back to him for everything and because of everything. "Let the words of our mouth, and the meditations of our heart be acceptable in your sight, Lord, teach me how to pray" is what she sang, as an introduction to the congregation going into "Our Father." She was about seven.

"I live by his graceful eye," she says matter-of-factly. "It's by his mercy that I'm here. I am not perfect. I am not beyond anybody else. I am a child of God." All thanks are to him, all credit goes to him. At first, to her, it's not even worth delving into the idea that she's sold more records than she can count. "That don't mean nothing," she says with a dismissive wave of her hand. But then she backs up. "That's kind of shallow to say, 'It doesn't mean anything,' because it does mean something. Nobody just said, 'Whitney, here's your No. 1 record,' and then, 'Here's another, here's another.'"

"Bobby and I are having problems. We will work them out. Not we and the world."

she is devoted. It's all about him for her, so much so, you want her to ease up a bit. But she says, it's her God.

But Bobby is hers too. In a different way. Some said Whitney married Bobby to squish rumors of her alleged sexual relationship with her longtime friend Robyn Crawford. Others said she married to gain some "down-ness." Brown, according to gossip, did it for the money (Brown's got three platinum albums, but Houston's worth at least \$60 million; and she and Brown have a complicated, ironclad prenuptial agreement), and to give his scruffy bad-boy image some polish. The possibility that it might be love was only given passing consideration. When Michael Jackson eloped with Lisa Marie Presley, busbodies whispered that the world hadn't seen such an odd coupling since Whitney and Bobby. Houston crossed class lines when she married Bobby Brown—and people remain uncomfortable with it.

Less than a year after their July 1992 wedding, their daughter, Bobbi Kristina, was born. The child is Whitney's first, Bobby's fourth (for both, this is their first marriage). "My husband never thought I was so sexy as when I weighed 182 pounds," says Houston with a proud smile. There was a lovey-dovey single, 1993's "Something in Common," the video for which featured the new family, complete with house and swimming pool, and lots of hugging and kissing. *We're normal*, the video screamed.

But Brown's macho-man antics continued. He and Houston recently presented, together, the Best Video of the Year Award on the 1995 MTV Video Music Awards—but a few weeks later, Bobby was reportedly at a New York nightclub, telling old acquaintances he had moved out of their New Jersey home and showing off his left hand sans wedding band. Five months before

Here's seven in a row, I say, like I need to remind her how she ruled the mid-'80s.

"Right. I was determined. But I didn't know I was going to get all that. That just happened to be—people get joy from what I do. This is the gravy. My aunts told me, 'You put him before you, all things are possible.' I have tried the ways of my Savior."

But what she has not tried to be—and what some black people and most pop critics want her to be—is a "soul singer." You hear no shouting from Whitney. There is little flailing about. Whitney was 22 when she scored her first No. 1 hit with "Saving All My Love for You." And with other chart toppers like 1988's "So Emotional" and "Where Do Broken Hearts Go," she proved what she mostly is: profoundly and mega-successfully pop, as in popular. Whitney appeals to almost everybody. Even after participating in the selling of more than 70 million units worldwide, to some people, she is still "just" a beautiful woman with an astounding voice—still not enough, apparently, to be cool.

Jerry Wexler, legendary music man and cofounder of Atlantic Records, is famous for having produced Aretha Franklin's and Ray Charles's best sessions. He's also the man who helped formalize the Sweet Inspirations—the group that includes Whitney's mother, Cissy Houston—who backed up Elvis Presley, among others. He says he's getting down to brass tacks when he makes the following observations from his Long Island home in Easthampton: "Whitney's enunciation and diction are perfectly in step with all the great pop singers. Aretha Franklin and Cissy Houston have R&B bases, but Whitney is pop-based—with just enough soul to make it interesting and exotic."

To get a handle on what Wexler's not quite saying,

think of *pop* as the code word for "white" and *soul* as the code for "black." Truth is, some people are suspicious of African-American women like Whitney, who display a refinement not qualified by adjectives like "fierce" or "fly." If she doesn't symbolize for blacks and whites what whites supposedly are not, folks want to complain that she isn't "real." It's like, there must be some sort of wildness in there somewhere.

"Being a sister ain't being wild," Houston says. "It ain't running your voice till you can't run it no more."

Wexler says Houston has a little "lamination" over her soul. "Her voice has purity and drama, and it comes from the wellspring of her being. But Whitney doesn't have the shaking, trembling emotion, the sublimated sex that got feeling. Whitney, like [her cousin] Dionne [Warwick], is more of a cultivated work. I'm not suggesting Aretha isn't cultivated, but she's informed by a different passion. Aretha's and Cissy's church influences are there right out in front."

And Whitney's church influences aren't. But it's not like she went to the corner and had her pipes whitewashed. Houston says she's giving what she's got. "Do folks think there's more to me than what God gave me?" she asks, leaning forward in her chair, getting a little fired up. "Do they have a book on Whitney Houston that says, 'She's got some more! I know it's in there!' The remembrances being nervous about singing once in a show, and her mother gave her some advice: 'Just go out there, my mom told me. 'Go out there, flat-footed, and just sing. Sing.' That's what I did." And it's what she does still.

Then she slips into a voice that sounds like she's explaining Legos to Bobbi Kristina. "Soul is singing from where people can feel it. Soul is not what folks think it is."

Soul is the essence of your being. And that's exactly what I'm giving."

Houston: I'm a daughter, a sister, a wife, a mother. How do you tell this all? How do you do this all? There's no one to balance you. My strength, I think, is just doing all those things. Being all those things.

VIBE: Singer... actress. You must be tired sometimes.

Houston: Oh, girl, please. Sometimes I feel like saying,

"Whitney! just left the building." [Laughs] And she's not coming back. [More laughs] Ever.

People felt Whitney Houston's cover of Dolly Parton's "I Will Always Love You." One of six songs she contributed to the soundtrack for 1992's *The Bodyguard*, the single remained the No. 1 pop hit for 14 weeks. It swept every awards show and became the most inescapable song of the year. Whitney made her acting debut in the film, and her performance was panned—but fans paid more than \$289 million to see her and Kevin Costner have awkward banter, fall in a vague sort of love, and then break up for no apparent reason. It was worth it, though, to see Whitney—glam in a silk scarf and big shades—running out on the tarmac to give Costner that good-bye kiss. And to hear her sing that song.

She has said that she knew she kind of "hit it" the moment she walked out of the studio, but the reason "I Will Always Love You" sold as many copies as it did is because Whitney gave up some new Whitney. She already had 18 million albums behind her, between *Whitney Houston* (1985), *Whitney* (1987), and *I'm Your Baby Tonight* (1990), but there was a newness about "I Will Always Love You" and, to a lesser degree, her cover of Chaka Khan's "I'm Every Woman." At 29, the woman

TRULY BLESSED

"I live by his graceful eye. It's by his mercy that I'm here. I am not perfect. I am a child of God."



PROFOUNDLY POP

Whitney remembers being nervous about a show. Her mother gave her some advice: "Go out there, flat-footed, and just sing."



was coming into her own.

There's no denying that Houston's personal life was at a crossroads around the time she recorded one of the biggest-selling songs in music history. Whatever Whitney Houston's premarital days were like, something happened when she got to know Bobby Brown. She reconsidered her other relationship(s) and fell in love with, married, and had a child with a man many thought—and continue to think—was absolutely wrong for her. Even if you're an utter cynic and think the marriage was false and the baby a prop, Whitney was making decisions, taking risks, maybe feeling the power of her money and her career. She was being *grown*. She had something to sing about.

And she sang. Aside from the Kenny G-like alto sax solo in the bridge, "I Will Always Love You" is perfection. She sings the word *bittersweet* bittersweetly. And there is a plaintiveness about her delivery—her phrasings evidence of a tense, elegant restraint, like she could scream but chooses not to. Parton's song is full of the kind of noble sentiments that, delivered with Houston's usual bombast—as in her 1986 version of George Benson's "Greatest Love of All"—would have become just another big, melodramatic Whitney ballad. Instead the girl sings, for the first time, like she knows what love is. Not just sex, not just comfort, not just longing, not some urgent combination of the three—but love.

The song conveys the profound happiness of realizing you have the guts to believe that your relationship will never end. It's a turning point in any person's life, and Whitney sang it. And she really does believe that love is a possibility for two working people at this point in history. She feels like *Waiting to Exhale* (for which she recorded

day like I want to." She can, of course, but she wants—and has—a different kind of life.

I tell her that lifestyle would be nice, though—only half-joking. "It would be very nice," she says, laughing with me. "But it's not like that." Her house is quiet except for Bobbi Kristina and her six-year-old cousin Blaire, who chit-chat on and on. "I pray that love is real," Houston tells me, gesturing toward her daughter, a sesame gold toddler in pale yellow play clothes. "I look at her, and I go, Oh no. This shit's got to work. Just look at her." Whitney goes into a quiet mini-mantra: "This has got to be worth fighting for. It's got to be worth fighting for. It's got to be worth fighting for."

Whitey Houston lives in Mendham, N.J. It's an affluent township right outside a quaint colonial city called Morristown. Mendham has few sidewalks, and the street names aren't painted on metal signs and attached to tall poles. They're etched into short granite pillars stuck into the ground.

We're in the babyproof family room. There are pictures on the walls of Houston and Kenneth "Babyface" Edmonds and L.A. Reid, of her and Michael Jackson. On the sofa, there's a stuffed panda dressed like a clown. Near it, a tiny red bike with training wheels. It's Fisher-Price city, basically—all kinds of stuff for Bobbi Kris, as Whitney calls her, and Bobbi Kris's cousins and friends. There's also a photo of Whitney in what must have been 1964 or '65, back when her dad started calling her Nippie. A full-faced toddler, her hands are clasped in her lap. She's looking up expectantly.

Bobbi Kristina talks ("I'm two!"), goes up and down the stairs, and gets bossy with everyone. She can scream

he's pissed off at being disrespected. He doesn't like to be disrespected. He has a temper from hell." And that, for whatever reason, is okay with her.

"I love my sexy baby," she says of Brown, smiling big. "And then some." Whitney Houston's been got. And it looks like that kind of love that no one else can tell you shit about—"cause you know. Because you're up in it." We got our thing. We do our thing. And, she tells me, "You can make it work."

We've been talking about how people of color are too often accepting of sexism so as not to take the spotlight off racism. About how we sometimes get caught up staring at the idea of subordination, trying with it, and wondering if that's what it takes to maintain a relationship with a man. We talk about all that, and about how we're still trying to be, like Des'ree says, bad, bold, wiser, tough, strong, together.

Houston cuts through my little rhetoric, though, right to the chase: "The independence of black women," she says in a matter-of-fact tone, "is very difficult for black men."

I ask her how much, then, does it fall to us to compromise. She cuts me off, but doesn't have an answer. "I ask myself that too," she says. But then she tells me there are other places I can go to get my question addressed. "You have to talk to Diahann Carroll one day. Or Lena Horne. I've talked to those ladies. They give you the story: *This* is what you have to deal with if you want to do this. You got to put up and deal with this certain kind of thing because this is what happens." And all Whitney's enigmatic "chises" seem to stand for "Just be" and "Sussibbbbbb" and "He needs to feel big so make yourself small if you want him to stay."

"He's a good man. He takes care of me. Disrespect him and you've got a problem."

two new songs, the sublime single "Exhale" and "Count on Me," a duet with CeCe Winans) addresses many of the ways women are feeling about modern relationships. *Exhale*, based on Terry McMillan's best-seller, is the story of four African-American women coming to terms with themselves and their relationships. Women tired of holding their breath, waiting for their lives to begin.

Directed by Forest Whitaker, and costarring Angela Bassett and Lela Rochon, the film, according to Houston, is an important movie for sisters, "but for Caucasian sisters as well." McMillan wanted Whitney to play the resilient Savannah Jackson from the beginning. "Whitney represents something wholesome and down-home," says the author from her home in Danville, Calif. "Little-town girl makes it big. There's an innocence to Whitney, a vulnerability. Sometimes people think it's false, but it ain't. She takes a lot of criticism with grace and finesse. I've watched her."

Whitney says she is very much Savannah. "Her character is a lot like mine. Savannah's very serious, a hard worker. Rachel, in *The Bodyguard*—now, her world and my world are a lot alike. I understand all that madness and craziness. But just Rachel herself, how she is—nothing like me at all. I was more of an actress in *Bodyguard* than I am in *Exhale*."

She says she and Savannah have another thing in common: "I believe in relationships. And *Exhale* does too. But *Exhale* also says, 'Fuck that. It ain't like that.' What your mama taught you, and what her mother may have taught her, is now different. Women are more independent. We had to be. It's not just about the men going out and being the greatest anymore. Let's do our thing, together." She says "together" as if speaking to men everywhere. "I can't sit home and cook and watch stories all

like crazy, this offspring of Whitney and Bobby, the couple that's just too odd for folks to get over. They had it already set up," Houston says, picking up Bobbi Kris and seating her on the table. "Who they thought I should be with, I mean."

Who, I wonder—Costner?

"I'm not one to be talking about black and white issues," she says. "Because I don't come with a lot of that. But we all know who runs this whole thing—we all know it's power, right? Well, when they saw me, they saw me as their little princess, and [figured] 'She's going to marry a white man, or whatever.' Houston says she's tried to tell people who she is. "I come from Newark, born and raised in New Hope Baptist Church. All-girl school, mostly white girls, yeah—but this is what I am. This is what I'm used to. This is what I like. What you all may think it is, it ain't. Whoever set this little story up before I got here, it's changed. It's different. I'm not Diana [Ross]. I'm not."

She says, too, that she knew there would be drama surrounding her and Brown's marriage, but not the furor. "I didn't know they would go as low as dogging my husband for some stuff he never did, the lies they told on him—like that he doesn't take care of his kids—that make him look like a lowlife." Whitney's piqued. She's protective of Brown. Like most women in love, what others perceive as his weaknesses, Houston believes are Brown's strengths.

"I've got a good man," she says forcefully. "He takes care of me. I don't have to be scared of anything because I know he will kick every ass—" she pauses and then, all intense, she says, "I'm telling you, disrespect him and you've got a problem. All they can catch him doing is tearing somebody's ass up, or ripping out a door, because

"A friend of mine told me recently..." Whitney begins—and she's imploring now. Serious. Bobbi Kris has long since gone back upstairs when Lori, Houston's assistant, is taking care. "...Told me that when you feel your spirit being sucked dry, when you feel the *spirit God* gave you being taken away—that's when it's not right, and you have to let go. *That's when you have to let it go.*"

She's vague; she's got to be. She can't just be telling me *all her business* (like I told her mine). But it is lovely to fantasize about how things could be—no more competition, no more resentment, no more folks thinking that just because a woman is busy, and has her own ideas, and tries to make herself happy, that she can't be a girlfriend or a wife. "I want things to change—like last week," she says, smiling. We do a high-five—just a little one, because it's just a little victory, fantasizing.

And then there's no more smile, and Whitney Houston is staring at me dead-on. She's getting a little antsy, and she emphasizes what she wants to emphasize. Houston, the singer, the actress, the daughter, the mother, the wife—she knows who she is. Even if her life is a hurricane, her soul is serene. She exudes the kind of energy that says she has as much faith in herself as she has in the God she talks about so relentlessly. Houston knows who she is.

"You ask me, can relationships *be*?" She stands up. "Can they *exist*? Well, sometimes they just can't," she says. "Cause I'm going to be me. I'm going to do what I do. And if you love me, you're not going to want to take me from me."

Is she talking about Bobby Brown? I don't know. My next line is a lame "I heard that." Because no matter who else she's speaking of, Whitney Houston is mostly speaking about herself. And I hear her. ■

Calvin Klein
underwear



what label's 10th anniversary, *Cheo H. Coker* reports how "Rush" took Def Jam from

Russell Simmons and Def Jam transformed pop culture and turned hip hop into a business. On the

a

memory lane back to the fast lane. *Photographs by Larry Fink*



Don't teach that child those sad songs;

He's young, and belongs to spring.

The "Happy Warrior's Medley" is the only song that he should sing.

Don't push your fears down on that child, let him climb the highest tree.

There's nothing like a child of nine when his spirit is running free.

Don't tell him that darkness carries evil, in fact that is not so

Darkness is as good as light, if you keep your soul aglow.

So let him run, let him play, let him laugh and shout

Don't let him find, before his time, what life is all about.

—Daniel Simmons Sr.

(written while watching his nine-year-old son, Russell, run down the street)

August 18, 1995. Thirty minutes before his scheduled 12:15 a.m. appearance on *Dennis Miller Live*, Russell Simmons is visibly nervous. In public, the 37-year-old record label head, fashion designer, and film and television producer exudes power, even when doing the most casual things: cuddling with a supermodel at New York's Bowery Bar alongside Calvin Klein; barking chart positions with his unmistakable lisp through the cell phone that appears to be permanently affixed to his ear; pumping the hand of a movie producer while pitching his latest money scheme.

But put him in front of a live audience and he twitches. (His phobia of flubbing in public is the reason you rarely hear him say anything more than "Thanks for coming, God bless you, good night" on *Def Comedy Jam*.) "I never do live TV," Simmons says to someone on the other end of his phone while playing with the sole of his size 10 1/2 white shell-top Adidas. "But they said they'd come anywhere, so as a joke I said if they came to my house at the Hamptons, I would do it. I look out my window this afternoon, and there's a satellite truck." →

RUSH

Before his fireside chat, Simmons changes from his white Ralph Lauren Polo short-sleeved shirt to a beige Phat Farm jersey. He looks at his father, Daniel Simmons Sr., who's flown up from Florida to celebrate his 72nd birthday with his sons at the vacation house Russell shares with record executive Andre Harrell. Daniel Jr. will arrive tomorrow morning. Joey (a.k.a. Run) just left to do a Run-D.M.C. concert in Germany. The eldest Simmons's skin is weathered, but with his balding head, basset-hound-cute face, and confident stare, he's the image of his middle child.

"Daddy, do I look like a president, or not?"

"Yeah," his dad says. "Like Thicky Dick."

The subject of Miller's chirpy monologue this night is power—the difference between the real and the pretend kind. And when the comedian/host calls on Simmons via satellite, Simmons has a question for him. "Do I have pretend power?" Simmons asks rhetorically. "Yeah," he says, relaxing a bit. "I do."

"Come on," Miller counters, "you're in TV, film, records, fashion. Why do you call yours pretend power?"

"I guess we're a big black company," Simmons tries to explain. "And I guess that's why I'm here. Right?" "Cause I'm black?" "Cause my white competitors are bigger."

Maybe so. But if "mainstream" America has always been scared of whatever was raw, black, and avant-garde, Simmons has forced it to deal with the purest form of black expression that pop culture has seen in 20 years. His is the exact opposite of the Berry Gordy charm-school ethic. Simmons transformed hip hop into the multinational business it is, making him no less a pioneer than Sun Records president Sam Phillips, the man who discovered Elvis Presley and brought on rock 'n' roll.

Simmons negotiated the first major-label record deal for an MC: Kurtis Blow, Mercury Records, 1980. He founded Def Jam Recordings with Rick Rubin in 1984. Through Rush Artist Management (Simmons's nickname was, and

like glorified employees. I am a glorified employee of this entire entertainment structure. I don't care about being the biggest black entertainment company."

But now, Miller's got a question. "Russ," he asks, "do you think it's harder to acquire power—or to keep it?"

"Well, Dennis," says Simmons with a bit of a smile, "I'm gonna try to acquire some, and then I'm gonna try to keep it. So I'm gonna have to let you know."

Q: What's the greatest misconception about you?

A: That I work. [Smiles]

As a young man, Russell was so intense, it was like he had blinders on. He could never fail, "cause he would never allow himself to," says Shirley Simmons, Russell's stepmother and longtime neighborhood friend. "I'd get a job at the post office before I'd do what he does. The more money you have, the more you want. It's a drug. I don't even think he's aware of it, but it's a way of life—the one-upmanship, the game."

Simmons has been playing the game a long time. His father taught history and black studies at New York's Pace University. His mother, Evelyn, who died last year, worked for the parks department and was an artist. A lifelong activist, Daniel Sr. marched and demonstrated during the civil rights struggle in New York, often with Daniel Jr. at his side and Russell on his shoulders.

When they moved to Hollis from South Jamaica, Queens, in November 1964, Hollis was an idyllic place: green lawns, flourishing businesses, and a caring community. But before long, changing economic times helped turn it into a suburban ghetto not unlike modern Compton—except that it wasn't as easy to get guns. Russell's life has been about bridging the gap between the streets and his solid background since Day One.

His world now includes trendy restaurants like Nick & Tony's in Southampton. Right now, Mr. Simmons,

your whole face froze up. I lived selling that shit for two years. That's how Kurtis Blow got his name; we used to call him that because he couldn't stop selling it."

For a while, like that, Simmons was the Man. He ran around wearing a big gold medallion emblazoned RUSH. "I got arrested once," he recalls, "with 10 bags of reefer, but they let me off. I was almost in my third year of college, and it was getting to where either I was gonna be a criminal for real or do something better with my life." Shortly thereafter, around 1978, he started giving parties.

Hip hop gave Simmons focus. It began in Harlem's Charles Gallery when he saw a rapper named Eddie



"Black culture is too significant in American

occasionally still is, Rush), he guided the careers of his younger brother, Joey "Run" Simmons; L.L. Cool J.; the Beastie Boys; Eric B. & Rakim; and many others. And with platinum-plus artists like Method Man, Redman, Warren G., and Montell Jordan, the Def Jam turntable logo still represents astronomical musical power.

HBO has just picked up his raunchy *Def Comedy Jam* for 13 more shows, and his Phat Farm clothing line—a \$5-million-a-year business—is moving closer to national distribution. He's produced two morbid dramas with *King of New York* director Abel Ferrara: *The Addiction* and *The Funeral*. He's also producing, with Brian (Apollo 13) Grazer, a remake of *The Nutty Professor* starring Eddie Murphy. Movies from his own production company, Def Pictures, will be distributed through Polygram films.

But Simmons is far from satisfied. He wants to be compared to the billionaire David Geffen of the world. A 24-hour syndicated hip hop radio network called DefNet is in development. He founded Rush Philanthropic Arts last year with his brother Daniel. There's a cologne development deal with Revlon for a scent tentatively called Flavor. But despite all that, and despite the fact that he set the stage for young entrepreneurs from Sean "Puffy" Combs to Marion "Suge" Knight to land lucrative deals with major labels, Russell still believes he lacks *real* juice, that his power is pretend. "Me, Quincy [Jones], Andre [Harrell]—none of us have *shit*," he says later. "Black culture is too significant in American culture for black people to be walking around

Shirley Simmons, and Joanne Goulborne ("My nan-nay," Simmons says affectionately) are sitting down for a meal. Shirley takes away his phone, and Russell sulks like a child. A few tables over, Steven Spielberg and Kate Capshaw entertain friends. It's the kind of place where people with Russell's kind of clout can get two tables on a Friday night on short notice.

"I was the only one of my brothers born without any talent," Simmons jokes. "I'm a shark." If not a shark, he's definitely a hustler. "I was a warlord for the 7 Immortals, 17th Division," he says of the days when he used to break up high school parties and plan rumbles. "How stupid is that? We went to Coney Island once, wearing our colors, and some members of the Outlaw division of the Black Spades came out. We were like 16 or 17, and these muthafuckas were like 30 years old. Outlaws couldn't wash, so they were filthy old men, murderers. We were so scared, we turned our colors inside out and separated." After finishing August Martin High School, he got into City College (he was a sociology major) but still messed around in the streets. Simmons has only ever held one "real" job other than Def Jam—at the Orange Julius on 4th Street in Queens. He got fired after a month but soon figured out another way to get paid.

"Right next to the job was a place selling Coco Leaf incense," he says from the same plant from which cocaine is derived. "You could buy it at the store—legally—and then cut the hell out of it. Put it in your mouth, and

Cheeba. Simmons realized that a scene was emerging, but that it had no infrastructure, and no one stepping up to build one. "The energy of the music, of the street—that feeling didn't need me to get out," he says. "Rap would be here today, it just would have come out differently. The only difference I made was that I could see rappers as long-term artists when others couldn't."

According to Bill Stephney, former Def Jam vice president, founding Public Enemy producer, and chairman of StepSons Records, Simmons saw more than that. "A

lot of black disco execs—almost all unemployed now—said no to Russell Simmons and his vision,” he says. “That boom chiki chik chik of ‘Sucker MCs’ was the sound of a revolution, and Simmons was one of the producers of that sound. Run-D.M.C.’s rhymes were on some old Paul Revere shit.” The B-boys were coming.

Russell Simmons didn’t start Def Jam by himself. Def Jam was born in the messy NYU dorm room of a Long Island-born party animal named Rick Rubin. “I’m not sure it’s safe to say that Russell and I started a cultural revolution,” Rick says from Holly-

song caught the ear of Simmons, who was exploring similar musical territory. “I couldn’t believe a white boy made ‘It’s Yours,’” he says.

“Back then, Russell used to wear sports coats, penny loafers, and argyle socks,” Rubin says. “He used to care what the industry thought of him. I used to tell him as long as the music was good, they’d have to deal with his way.” Through hanging out with Rubin, Russell realized he didn’t have to conform. He could make people walk his way. The suits and Brats were kicked to the curb for jeans, a fisherman’s cap, and Adidas. He was following the first rule of rock ‘n’ roll: Fuck you and your heroes.

Rubin started hanging around the raggedy Rush offices (in Downtown Manhattan) every day. When a demo tape came in from a 16-year-old Hollis kid named James Todd Smith, Rubin knew he’d heard the voice of the decade. Convinced that Smith’s song would be a smash, he and Simmons each invested \$4,000 to put out the first Def Jam record (after changing Smith’s name to L.L. Cool J and trading in his white leather go-go boots and pants with straps around the knees for pressed Lee jeans and a red Kangol). L.L.’s “I Need a Beat” (1985) was recorded in Rubin’s dorm for \$700. It went on to sell 100,000 copies independently. The success of that song, along with the Beastie Boys’ 1984 “Rock Hard” and singles by Jazzy Jay and the Hollis Crew, was enough to convince CBS Records to cut a \$600,000 distribution deal with the label. Rick was 21, and Russell was 26. The golden age had arrived.

The golden age of Def Jam was concurrent with the golden age of hip hop. In 1985, ‘86, and ‘87, Simmons and Rubin released three of the most influential albums in hip hop history: the Beasties’ *Licensed to Ill*, L.L. Cool J’s *Radio*, and Public Enemy’s *101 Best Rush the Show*. Although Run-D.M.C. were signed long-term to Profile, they might as well have been on Def Jam since Simmons was their manager and coproducer and Rick helped

made a deal for them to make a \$10 million movie with Universal. Rick insisted that he finance and direct one for \$750,000. I agreed with Lyor that they should have done the bigger movie. Me allowing Rick to be heavy-handed with them ruined everything.”

Plans for the Beastie movie were scrapped, and when Rubin wrote and directed Run-D.M.C.’s disastrous 1988 *Tougher Than Leather*, Rubin and Cohen went toe-to-toe again. “I went to interview Russell for the Run-D.M.C. book I was writing,” says sometime Simmons publicist Bill Adler. “All he kept saying, with the most pained expression on his face, was, ‘My Jews are fighting.’ He realized that the fighting was less over the groups than over who had better position with him.”

“There was never really a final straw,” Rubin says. “I remember taking Russell to a restaurant. ‘Do you wanna leave Def Jam?’ I asked. He said no. And I said, ‘I guess I will.’” Rubin went to L.A. to produce the *Less Than Zero* soundtrack and never (really) came back.

Later, Rubin—with acts like Johnny Cash, Slayer, the Four Horsemen, and Andrew Dice Clay—formed Def American Recordings. (In 1993, he theatrically changed the label’s name to American Recordings by physically burying the word *def*.) Def Jam continues to give Rubin points on all subsequent earnings from L.L. Cool J and Public Enemy, the groups he discovered. Currently, Def Jam Recordings is distributed by Polygram Records, and the conglomerate owns 50 percent of the label. But as far as Rubin is concerned, things are far from settled. He says he’s entitled to half of the \$33 million Simmons received from the Polygram deal in 1994. Despite their ongoing lawsuit, the two remain friends.

“I love Russell,” says Rubin. “I don’t think it’s his intention to fuck me over. I just want to get what I’m owed.”

“Please,” says Carmen Ashhurst, president of Rush Communications, the blanket organization that oversees Simmons’ various financial ventures. “We’ve given

culture for blacks to be glorified employees.”

them do just about everything else on *Raising Hell*.

The name Def Jam began to represent all that was revolutionary about urban music. But as the label reached its pinnacle, Rubin and Simmons’ relationship began to sour. Then came problems between Rubin and the Beastie Boys, as well as between Rubin and Lyor Cohen, a recent arrival to Rush Management from Los Angeles, who appeared to have his eyes on the Def Jam throne Rick occupied.

Cohen is a large man. With his dour expression, cigar, and thick accent, some people find this son of Israeli immigrants turned hip hop mogul intimidating. But along with the tough-guy stance comes a shrewd business mind. He’s been president and chief operating officer at Def Jam for two years, and was on the management side of Rush Artist Management since 1986.

For Cohen in it all comes down to one thing: “*Base all your decisions on the logo. Is this album cover great? (Is it good for the logo?) Should we sign this group? (Is it good for the logo?)*” Russell and Rick developed something—Def Jam, the company, the spirit, the logo—that resonated with people’s insides. Any decision I make is acid-tested against that standard.” But costly mistakes were made—like losing the groundbreaking Beastie Boys, one of the most profitable acts in the history of hip hop.

“The biggest mistake I’ve ever made was letting Rick fuck me up with the Beasties,” says Simmons. “Rick thought he was larger than the group. He was a member of the Beastie Boys in the beginning. When Lyor

en him 90 percent of his money. Def Jam as a corporate entity is not jerking Rick.”

As for the 10-year Def Jam anniversary boxed set, four discs that include many Rubin-produced hits, everyone involved—even Rubin—is enthusiastic. Included are songs from the deepest publishing catalog in hip hop: L.L. Cool J, Public Enemy, Slick Rick, EPMD, Nice & Smooth, Onyx, Method Man, Redman, the Beastie Boys, Warren G, and many others.

The real triumph is that at the exact same time this set is coming out, L.L. Cool J is releasing another album,” Simmons says excitedly over his cellular—he’s on his way to JFK for a 10-day European press tour. “Ten years after L.L. was written off by critics as a joke, he can still come out with a record that people care about.”

The following years were hard for the label. By 1991, Sony Music—which purchased CBS Records in 1990—demanded Def Jam restructure their departments, and many of the most talented young execs (Sterphrey, Lisa Cortes, Dante Ross) left to blaze their own trails. Simmons and Cohen formed Rush Associated Labels. A few flops later (including the Famlee, Terminator X, and The Afros), they found themselves \$20 million in debt.

“I woke up one morning and called Lyor,” Simmons recalls. “I said, ‘We’re 20 mil in the hole. I hate it here.’ We began that transition three years ago, and finally, we were able to buy back the company.” In some ways, HBO and *Def Comedy Jam* saved the label. “When we were cold as ice,” says Cohen, “*Def Comedy Jam* was the



STAR TIME
Clockwise from top left: Erick
Sermon, Fredro Starr and Savae
from Onyx, and Simmons

wood, where he now heads American Recordings. “I think it’s just that I like controversy.”

Rubin, who’d been haunting New York’s few hip hop clubs during the late 1970s, was responsible for a collaboration between a hellified MC named T-La Rock and a mixer named Jazzy J. What made “It’s Yours” stand apart—aside from the urgent throb of DMX and 808 kicks—was the fact that the song had a chorus structure. “Growing up listening to the Beatles and Zeppelin,” says Rubin, “it seemed like the thing to do.” The

hottest shit in America. It helped us maintain some respect for our name."

After Simmons's small-screen success, Hollywood wasn't far behind. "He's a work machine," says *Nutty Professor* producer Grazer. "I love seeing him, but it's not stressful. He jams business in your face 110 percent."

Though they respect his energy and vision, some film insiders say Simmons can't do the Hollywood thing over the phone. "He spends too much time talking, and not enough listening," says one Tinseltown bigwig. "The music thing he has down well, but movies are different. You have to study the process, and he doesn't do that. I think he'll always be able to get movies off the ground, but he has to pay some dues."

Meanwhile, the music side of the Rush empire seems to have gotten back on track. First, Cohen landed Redman, then he went on to bring West Coast flavor to Def Jam with Warren G, Montell Jordan, and Domino. Next, Simmons signed Method Man, who not only delivered a platinum album, but also teamed up with Mary J. Blige for a duet that ruled the airwaves all summer long. The soundtrack to *The Show* shipped 1.1 million units and shot to the top of *Billboard*'s R&B album chart. And in a move to shake things up a bit, dancehall artists Capleton and Cali Rankins were brought into the fold. With sales from

his contract," Simmons says, unconvincedly.

"He's breaking on Prince 'cause he's jealous of us," Webb says to me, giving Simmons a playful look.

"He's broke, ain't he? How can he afford to see you?"

"He's got a *plane*. I don't die the women you go out with. And you go out with some roach bitches," she says, pulling out the B-girl lingo as a defense mechanism.

"I've known Roni for so many years," Simmons says, smiling and running his fingers through her hair. "She's nuts, but she's grown into a beautiful woman."

"Take notes now," Webb says, unaffected by Simmons's display of affection. "This is how Russell gets girls." Then she gets up to go say hey to a friend across the room.

Simmons insists his and Webb's relationship is platonic. Many, though, think Veronica and Russell used to get it on back in the day. Now she, Simmons, and Andre Harrell run like the three black musketeers.

But video director Brett Ratner seems to think Simmons and Webb have never laid in the cut together. "He and Veronica travel together a lot and sometimes stay in the same bedroom," says Ratner a few nights later. "I talked to Russell every day when they were in Europe. I'd be, like, 'You fuck Roni yet?' And he'd be, like, 'I can't, man. It would fuck our friendship up. If I did it, it would cost me a wedding ring.'"

what to do after a while is get up as high as you can."

Far from his South Bronx housing project roots, Brown is a childhood friend of Harrell's and was Mr. Hyde to his Dr. Jekyll. Like Harrell, Brown's among the pioneer generation of hip hop millionaires, and as far as he's concerned, one man is responsible for it: Simmons.

"So fuckin' what if Russell hangs out in the Hamptons?" Brown yells—like he can hear the "no sellout" shouts from the brothers on the block. "Russell's got \$30 million! Would you be in the projects with that money? No! You'd be out here. On a boat. I grew up in the ghetto, I been shot at! I don't want to get shot at anymore."

"Russell remembers the old-school rhymes," Brown continues. "He can take you back to when brothers was smoking dust in the back room of the Disco Fever, passing around the dollar bill filled with cocaine. But at the same time, he can sit up there with [Polygram chairman] Alain Levy and get all that money. That is the genius of Russell Simmons. He can communicate with his artists and get down on a corporate level. He showed muthafuckas how to organize the street and make it a business."

And Russell Simmons keeps on getting that money. And most of whatever else he wants. At a sushi restaurant in TriBeCa, Simmons is pushing the buttons



RUSSELL RUSHING: At Eddie Murphy's wedding, with 3rd Bass and Oran Juice Jones; with (from left) Andre Harrell, Veronica Webb, and Michael DiLorenzo; with (clockwise from lower right) Rick Rubin, Jam Master Jay, Steven Tyler, DMC, and Run

hits by Warren G, Montell Jordan, and Method Man alone, the label stands to make between \$70 million and \$80 million this year. The beat does go on.

Everybody be heeving about what Rush be doing

You see my new Mercedes, man?

Talking so much about Rush, Rush every time

The bees just be begin' man

"Rush this, Rush that"

Yep, they be rolling it in my office all day

Nothing but money, and it be green.

—Russell Simmons

on L.L. Cool J.'s 1985 "That's a Lie"

like coming here," Simmons says of New York's tony Bowery Bar, as Ted Field, a co-owner of Interscope Records, stops by to pay his respects. "I feel like Rick from *Casablanca*."

Smelling like Fahrenheit, Simmons sits in a booth on a lazy summer night. By his side is constant companion and Revlon supermodel Veronica Webb, as well as his homeboy, painter Victor Matthews. It's always the same thing at the Bowery: food, drink, big-money deals, and fly women.

While Simmons scopes out a Brazilian-looking model across the room to see if she received the White Star champagne he sent to her table, someone brings up the man formerly known as Prince. Simmons can't help but needle Webb, who's reportedly been linked with him.

"I wouldn't pay a penny more than \$400,000 for

"He could settle down, but not yet," Webb says a few nights later. "What Rush needs is a windup toy with the body of Pam Grier and the mind of Einstein."

He seems to have had a similar problem back in the early '90s when he was involved with the former Marita Stavrou—he says it's the only time he's ever been in love. "I didn't know I was supposed to keep her," Simmons says. They broke up, he got her back, but he continued his philandering ways and before he realized she was it, she married Pacers guard Reggie Miller in 1993.

A few weeks later, Simmons, Matthews, and I run into 34-year-old Uptown exec Alonzo Brown, one of Simmons's friends from the old days. Brown and I ride in the front of his brand-new black convertible 300E Mercedes blasting "Player's Anthem," in search of a party. Simmons and Matthews sit on the convertible top, niding down lower Broadway, parade-style.

"I'm over Marita, man—for real," Simmons brags. Matthews laughs. "Nigga, please. Your eyes get sweaty every time you watch a Pacers game."

For the first time all night, Rush is at a loss for words.

Sometimes the "Keep it real" motto ruling hip hop gets tired—especially if you've been involved with the art form since its beginning. After a while, it gets to be about keeping it fabulous.

"If you come from a place where there were stampedes at concerts and shit all your life," says Brown as he drives down scenic Montauk Highway, "what you

on his cell phone (working up to what's usually a \$3,500 monthly bill); he's doing business right through all the raw fish. The phone fetish began when he was on the road with half of his groups while Rick Rubin was in the studio with the others. Some things never change.

From Madison Avenue to Crenshaw Boulevard, Simmons pushes people's buttons. Whether—according to some sources—it's helping Harrell negotiate the deal that will make him chairman of Motown Records (though neither will talk about Russell's role) or setting up deals with major sneaker companies for his own footwear and clothing line, Simmons is no longer following rock 'n' roll's rules. He's made, and is making, hip hop rules. Whether he or the world has come to terms with it, he's got power. Russell Simmons is not pretending.

"I have a real vision for my company now," he says between bites. "I see things more clearly. We're not competitive with some of the big white companies yet, but we will be. When we're producing four to six movies a year and some are successful, when the label is making \$200 million or \$300 million, and Phat Farm is a \$100 million line, and the 24-hour, all-hip hop radio network is up and kicking—then I'll be there."

But I have to know. "You have enough money to be comfortable for the rest of your life," I say. "You're 37 years old. Why not just slow down?"

Simmons almost drops his phone. He looks at me like I just asked him the stupidest question in the world.

"I don't know how to do anything else," he says.

Then the phone rings. □

Taste the difference between Good and Grande.

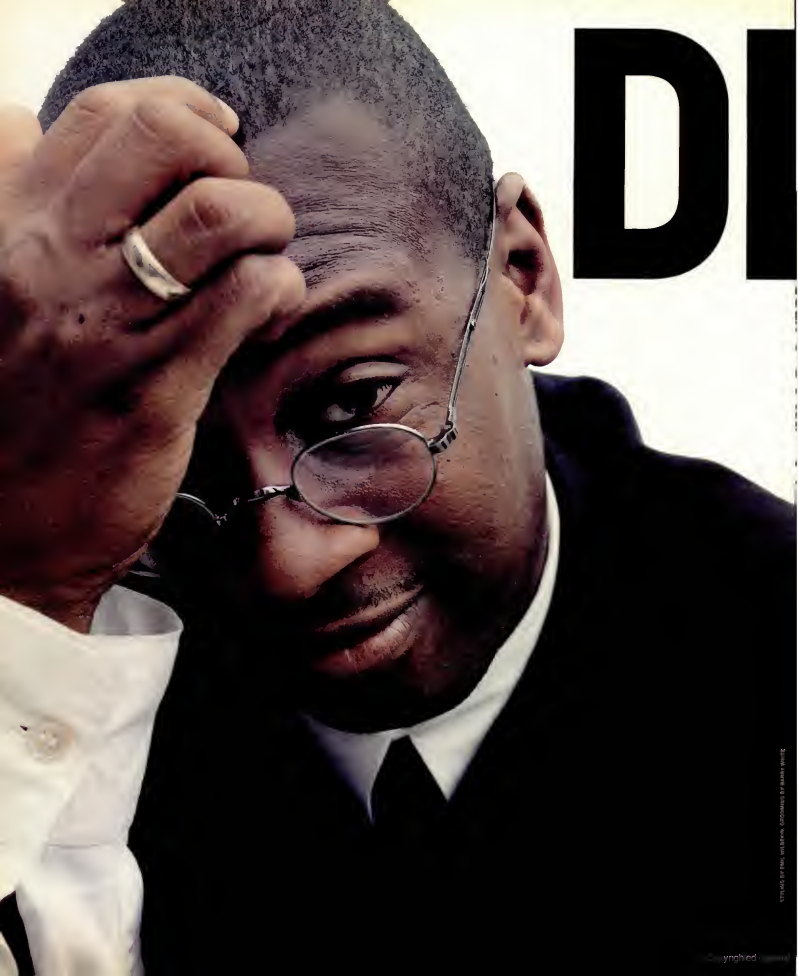


Only Grande Amber Brandy is aged an extra year in oak for extra smoothness. So after one sip, you'll understand why other brandies are good, but only Grande Amber is Grande.



Grande Amber Brandy from Paul Masson.

DI



RE DAY

In the business of music, there's no name with as much resonance as Motown. Former Uptown Entertainment president Andre Harrell—the man responsible for Jodeci, Mary J. Blige, and Heavy D—is taking over the legendary label and promising to bring the noise. But can he fight through the nostalgia and lead Motown into the 21st century? By Anthony DeCurtis. Photographs by Dana Lixenberg

You know how Jeffrey Katzenberg became Disney? That's what I want to do. Like, how you felt Jeffrey had a passion about Disney—his Mickey Mouse watches, Disney sweatshirt, Disney tie. That's what I'm talking about. I will be at the Motown Cafe. I'll make Motown ties, watches, sweatshirts. I intend to make Motown the black Disney," Andre Harrell says with a smile. "You might as well start calling me Walt."

Harrell, 35, is obviously a man with a plan. Good thing, too. He's stepping into one of the most visible jobs in the entertainment industry: president and CEO of Motown Records. "It's always been a dream of mine to head up Motown," he says.

Yet the lofty position confronts Harrell with a critical challenge. Motown has fallen far from what it once was. Aside from the monumental Boyz II Men, Motown has increasingly become a soundtrack for nostalgia, much more redolent of the past than the present. It's so hard to say good-bye to yesterday, indeed. Harrell, a product of the hip-hop generation, knows his job is to introduce Motown—music, television, film, video, animation, and new media—to tomorrow.

A Bronx native, he got his start in the early '80s as half of the rap duo Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. (He was Dr. Jekyll.) After moving over to the business side of the business, he hooked up with rap mogul Russell Simmons and soon landed a top spot at Simmons's company, Rush Communications, where he worked with the likes of Run-D.M.C., L.L. Cool J., and Whodini.

Harrell stepped out on his own in 1986, when he launched his own label, Uptown Entertainment, as part of a joint venture with MCA. At Uptown, Harrell defined a contemporary R&B sound for the hip-hop age, bringing the world Guy, Heavy D, Jodeci, Mary J. Blige, A.B. Sure!, Father MC, and most recently, Soul For Real (with whom he had his first No. 1 pop hit, "Candy Rain"). He produced the 1991 film *Strictly Business*, and he

coproduces the hit Fox series *New York Undercover*.

Successful as the artists on his label proved to be, Harrell has felt constrained in his efforts to make them pop superstars, both by his arrangement with Uptown's parent company, MCA, and by the troubling racial politics of the music business in general. Moving to Motown, which is now based in Los Angeles and owned by PolyGram, presents Harrell with the opportunity to put at least some of these issues behind him. At Motown, Harrell says, he'll have more people, more prerogative, more punch.

Seated on a couch in the living room of his Upper West Side New York apartment, dressed simply in a black shirt and white slacks, Harrell focused squarely through his blue shades on what must be done. A framed photo of a serious-looking Harrell arm-in-arm with Mickey Mouse sat on an end table.

Clearly a man who enjoys control, Harrell was soft-spoken and intent. He didn't want to be misunderstood. "Am I correct?" he would ask. "Do you follow me?" He leaned forward, and his voice rose with passion as he discussed his frustrations with MCA. Otherwise, he slipped back into the pillows of his sofa and spoke as if he was envisioning his future life in a dream.

Harrell knows he has as much on the line as Motown, if not more. All eyes will be on him. It's one thing to say you would've done something if only you'd gotten the chance. It's quite another to get the chance and have to do it.

"Every record has gotta be right," he said. "I'm trying to sign stars. I'm not gonna have wack-juice on me. Never did, never will."

What has Motown meant to you over the years? When was the first time you knew what it was?

The first true Motown experience I had was when the Jackson 5 were on the *Ed Sullivan Show*. I think it might've been, like, 1969, '70. They sang

"Stand!" and "I Want You Back." I had never seen a black teenager on television—it was incredible. After that, I realized who the Motown artists were. My parents listened to them: the Supremes, Marvin Gaye, Diana Ross, the Four Tops, the Temptations.

What did the company represent for you?

Motown has always been the epitome of black excellence and artistry. Stevie sang about love in the most sensitive way, as well as telling about the plight of his people. Marvin sang about the plight of his people and his internal fight, but he sang about love in a very sexy way. They were major influences.

Speaking of Stevie Wonder, he made a strong album last year and nothing happened with it. Can Motown sell a Stevie Wonder record in this day and age?

The Four Tops, the Temps, and, especially, Stevie Wonder and Diana Ross—these are national treasures. You have to treat them like events. Stevie Wonder, he's someone I would do an *Unplugged* with. Or a couple of years ago, it was Stevie's 30th anniversary in show business. You could have gotten Stevie Wonder a television special. We could have had artists pay tribute to him—pop artists, rock artists, R&B artists, rap artists, everybody could have participated. And there's probably no other female, black or white, who's as fabulous as Diana Ross, who epitomizes the glamour and excitement of a star diva.

What about new directions? What makes Motown happen in the '90s?

Motown has to become the lifestyle label for the times that the active record-buying audience—the audience who's 15 to 30—is living in. One of the ways you do this is by putting out records that are in the groove that that audience is living in. Like if Mary J. Blige was a Motown artist, Motown would have some of her imaging on it. It's that young, hip-hop-soul, Generation X energy. Same thing if Jodeci was on the label. Back in the day,

"WHEN YOU THINK OF MOTOWN NOW, YOU'RE GONNA THINK OF ANDRE HARRELL. I'M NOT GONNA WORK FOR MOTOWN, I'M GONNA BE MOTOWN."

Motown talked to everybody in the ghetto—and it talked to the rest of the world too.

That sounds like the philosophy you espoused at Uptown.
The thing that [Motown founder] Berry Gordy led the way with is the idea that the label had become the image of the label. Myself, I allowed whatever celebrity occurred in my career to happen through the artists. I was so consistent with the kinds of artists who were on my label, after a while, it was, like, "Who's behind all this?" I was behind it.

Going into Motown, my plan is this: When you think of Motown now, you're gonna think of Andre Harrell. I'm not gonna work for Motown, I'm gonna be Motown—in the way I dress, the records I put out, the causes I choose to get involved in, the artists from the past, the artists who are there now, and the artists in the future. Like I lived Uptown Records, I'm gonna live Motown Records.

But you, Russell Simmons, Sean "Puffy" Combs—and Berry Gordy before you—are entrepreneurs. You've identified with something—

—that's already existing. I'm gonna be Motown for this generation of young-adult record buyers. Motown was the blueprint. Berry Gordy was the blueprint for what I became.

Were you conflicted about leaving Uptown?

I had tremendous conflict. It was like I was walking away from my works of art. There will never be another [Mary J.] Blige—it's rare to find a queen. There will never be another Jodeci. There'll never be another Heavy D. But I have to go, because Motown gives me the power I need to go to the next level. I have to make African-American superstars. At Uptown, I was able to make black icons, but they were icons only to black people.

[I was] trying to grow Uptown, to have independence, to be able to say, "This act is getting ready to be a worldwide star, and I'm gonna take all my resources, and we're gonna march to this one beat." I was trying to do that for nine years. Between me and the corporation, I could never get it to happen.

In terms of support from MCA?

I think MCA, after a period, wanted some of these things to happen. For whatever reasons, though, the execution between the two sides never worked. The biggest record I ever had was Jodeci's [1991] *Forever My Lady*—3 million.

When [Anista president] Clive Davis got in the game, I felt myself shrinking. Once he got in business with LaFace [L.A. Reid and Kenneth "Babyface" Edmonds] and [Dallas Austin's] Rowdy Records and Puffy [Bad Boy Entertainment], Davis's commitment and his execution were taking those artists where I wanted my artists to go. I wanted Mary J. Blige to sell the 7 million that Toni Braxton did.

Jodeci came to me because I had Al B. Sure! So they figured, "He knows how to do this. We wanna be down with him." They drove 13 hours, sat in my lobby for eight hours just to meet me. Now, I feel like, with Anista being involved with LaFace and the other labels, they sold 7 million Toni Braxtons. They sold 6 million TLCs. I'm, like, if I can't sell these kinds of records, I'm gonna slowly shrink. I was catching heat from my artists, who wanted that kind of stature. I would bring that frustration to MCA, and we couldn't seem to come to terms.

Was the idea, "Well, Andre's doing fine. He's doing a couple of million here, a couple of million there. He's covered. We're gonna invest somewhere else?"

I felt like a figurehead. I had all this energy around me—like, I was the founder and chairman of Uptown Records, a major, culturally influential entertainment company for African-Americans in the '90s. But I didn't feel like the Man, because I couldn't put my finger on the button that would really make it happen. I don't want to be in that position anymore. I need to have more control. I need to be responsible for the big picture. And being at Motown positions me to create a truly black pop company. I got a film division, a television division. I got green-light power for small movies. I don't have to ask anybody.

What are your plans with Gordy?

We're gonna do a series of commercials—print and television. He endorses me. We spoke yesterday for about an hour, and he said, "Any advice I can give you about where we go from here, feel free to call me." We're gonna spend time together and talk about his history with the elder stars. I feel as if I've had a tremendous amount of experience working with stars' drama and ego, but we're talking a whole 'nother level of stars. I've never built a superstar. There're superstars at this house.

How do you build superstars?

If black stars are gonna have a shot at becoming pop stars, it's gonna be because the chairman of the company is committed to them—and because their music is his personal taste. That's what I'm bringing to black music, to black musical stars. Not just their art form but their plight as African-American men and women.

What you're describing is a role that black executives play, but aren't they often frustrated in their attempts to rise at most record companies?

I can't talk about it enough, how few black executives get to control their playing field. Black music is becoming the music of the popular culture. Because of that, companies are repositioning their priorities and trying to get in the game. But as black music becomes more important, there should be more black presidents and black chairmen. As soon as the black executive's artist reaches platinum, suddenly the artist and manager have to deal with the president of the corporation, because he controls the priorities at pop radio. The black executive becomes obsolete. As his music gets bigger,

his power diminishes. He's more or less told, "Go find the next act and establish it."

It's an emphasis on the creative—

—as opposed to the business. That's why young black executives don't get to become the old chairman—the wise men who've seen it and done it. They get to stay hot black executives so long as their instincts are hot. But this is a lifestyle business—only a few of us, black or white, are going to be cool enough to have great instincts our whole career.

The black executive is not given the opportunity to become the business and the music. Why not? Why shouldn't he be the one that everybody reports to? When you get an act that sells 5 million—at a major company—the black executive's out of the room. But when there's some sort of problem, the major label looks at the black executive: "Why can't you handle this act?"

When the artist hires a violent manager and the violent manager is coming up to the record company, the label's, like, "How did it get to this?" How? Because they [the white executives] couldn't see it coming. Because they're not sensitive to his issues. By then the relationship between the record company and the artist is dysfunctional. And then the black executive gets blamed and fired. But they created the monster.

When I had the artist, I talked to his mother, his girlfriend, his babies' mother with the two children, dealt with his drug counselor, and whatever other dysfunctional Generation X problems he has. He'd call me late at night.

But he feels like they're just businesspeople. And they don't understand. And they might be racist. He's coming with all that energy. Even if they like him as a person, he still has 400 years of issues he has to get over to accept them. And they have a lot of work to do to gain his trust and respect.

So what are your immediate plans?

I will be moving to Beverly Hills. I'll have a house out there for a 12-to-18-month period, and I'll be bicoastal between the New York and L.A. offices. Then I'm moving the company to New York. I'm going to have a satellite office in Atlanta—A&R-oriented. I'm going to build a recording studio in New York, Motown Studios.

Any new musical directions?

The sound I'm going for now is soul. I'm looking for voices that sound like 400 years of slavery and then some. I'm looking for that inspirational, take-us-out-of-our-plight, Aretha Franklin, Bill Withers, Al Green voice. I'm looking to build those kinds of stars now.

What about the younger acts on Motown? Have you met with Boyz II Men?

No. Those meetings will come after I execute the deal. Boyz II Men are the biggest group I've ever seen. I don't know what I'm bringing to the party except to keep them from going crazy from the level of success they've had. They probably need a break, a little time out to lead their personal lives. Outside of that, that formula is working. Queen Latifah, I'd like to bring her record sales up to match her celebrity. Zhane I'd like to give a little bit more image. I'm gonna bring Johnny Gill back—he had a fabulous first album. And I'm excited about working with Michael Bivins. He's tremendously talented, and if he and I get together, we can really do some important things.

Are you apprehensive?

I got a lot of work to do. But no problems. Making hits is not a problem. I'll be making some noise real quick. And I ain't gonna stop makin' noise until I'm done. □

MOTOWN IS KICKIN' IT
Being at my new job positions me
to create a truly black pop company.
I don't have to ask anybody.



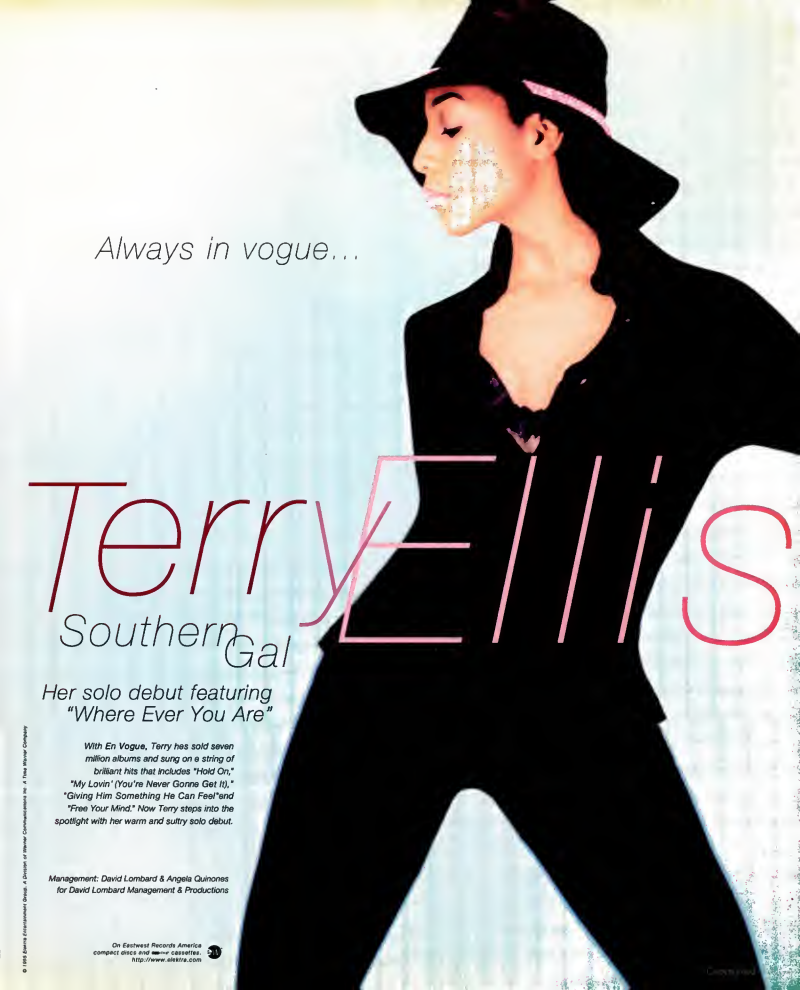
marc buchanan
pellé pellé



new york (212) 840-3232 midwest (313) 925-5500 los angeles (213) 622-4405 dallas (214) 870-0044 southeast (305) 456-9707
canada (514) 274-7000 japan (075) 371-0333 germany 071-617-8717 korea 02-3453-4851 france 88.75.65.87 UK 1-61-833-1966

KEITH MURRAY

art director: benard g. jacobs / photo: jerry jack



Always in vogue...

Terry Ellis

Southern Gal

*Her solo debut featuring
"Where Ever You Are"*

With En Vogue, Terry has sold seven million albums and sung on a string of brilliant hits that includes "Hold On," "My Lovin' (You're Never Gonna Get It)," "Giving Him Something He Can Feel" and "Free Your Mind." Now Terry steps into the spotlight with her warm and sultry solo debut.

Management: David Lombard & Angela Quinones
for David Lombard Management & Productions

On Eastwest Records America
compact discs and cassette
<http://www.alexia.com>

THE YEAR IN HIP HOP

1995

By Josh Tyrangiel



Tupac Shakur

June 15

After three groundbreaking albums, rap duo Pete Rock and C.L. Smooth break up.

June 18

The Notorious B.I.G. is arrested in Pennsylvania on charges that he broke a man's jaw and stole his beeper after a performance in New Jersey. A few days later, "One More Chance" debuts at No. 5 on the pop singles chart.

June 23

Bushwick Bill changes his name to Dr. Wolfgang Von Bushwickin the Barbarian Mother Funky Stay High Dollar Billstir to "show some expansion."

June 19

A New York judge rules that imprisoned British-born rapper Slick Rick can't be deported, despite protests by the U.S. Immigration Service.

January 14

Trip hop—a mélange of hip hop, ambient, and dub—hits the mainstream as Portishead's "Sour Times" enters the pop charts.

February 7

Tupac Shakur is found guilty of sexual abuse. The sentence: 18 months to four and a half years.



O'Jays

July 3

Despite two multi-platinum albums, TLC file for bankruptcy, citing debts of \$3.5 million.

July 16

Queen Latifah is the victim of a carjacking a few blocks from Harlem's Apollo Theatre. She escapes unharmed, but her bodyguard is shot in the stomach.

July 25

Bone Thugs-N-Harmony release *E. 1999 Eternal*, a tribute album to their late mentor, Eazy-E. The album makes no mention of AIDS.

August 2

The Notorious B.I.G. sweeps all four categories in which he's nominated at the second annual Source Awards.

March 13

At a Death Row Records post-Soul Train Music Awards party, Kelly Jamerson, 28, is stampeded by a mob and dies.

March 16

Eric "Eazy-E" Wright announces he has AIDS. He is visited in the hospital by former N.W.A. partners turned adversaries Dr. Dre and Ice Cube.

March 26

Eazy-E dies, setting off a frenzy of lawsuits between family members and business associates over his estate, reportedly worth \$15 million.

March 29

Mike Tyson is released from prison after serving three years on a rape charge.

July 17

Behind the summer-jam strength of "I Got 5 on It," the Luniz' *Operation Stackola* enters the R&B album chart at No. 1, bumping Michael Jackson's *HIStory* from the top spot.

Mike Rockard and C.L. Smooth want their separate ways.

August 10

Naughty by Nature's Treach—citing repeated harassment, assault, and physical abuse—files a \$2 million lawsuit against the police in his hometown of East Orange, N.J.

August 6

Brandy wins four Soul Train Lady of Soul Awards, including Best R&B/Soul Single, beating from Janet Jackson and Anita Baker.



March 30

O'Jays Dirty Bastard takes an MTV News camera along to pick up his welfare check while he sips champagne in the back of a stretch limo.



TLC: Big sales, huge debt



The Big Poppa got bigger.

Tupac's sentencing, Eazy's death, corporate politics, and



April 29
Tupac Shakur marries law student Keisha Morris inside New York's Clinton Correctional Facility.

April 28
Friday, written by and starring Ice Cube, opens in theaters nationwide. The movie's soundtrack, featuring Dr. Dre's "Keep Their Heads Ringin'," goes to No. 1 on *Billboard's* Top 200.

April 26
Bobby Brown is arrested after a fight in an Orlando, Fla. nightclub. Cops refuse to let him relieve himself; he pees in the back of the squad car.



August 15
Interscope Records sues C. DeLores Tucker for damages because she allegedly offered Death Row Records CEO Suge Knight \$80 million to abandon his contract with Interscope and work for her on a new Time Warner label. Two days later, Death Row files its own suit, against Tucker and Time Warner.

August 17
MTV chooses not to renew the contracts of *YO! MTV Raps* hosts Fab 5 Freddy, Doctor Dre, and Ed Lover after seven years on the network.

August 19
In 89 seconds, Mike Tyson ends Peter McNeely's 15 minutes of fame.

May 15
The Wu-Tang Clan's *Enter the Wu-Tang (36 Chambers)* goes platinum. (Later, three Clan solo albums—Method Man's *Tical*, Raekwon's *Only Built 4 Cuban Linx...*, and Ol' Dirty Bastard's *Return to the 36 Chambers: The Dirty Version*—debut on *Billboard's* pop Top 10.)

May 18
C. DeLores Tucker, president of the National Political Congress of Black Women, attends the annual Time Warner shareholders meeting and demands that the company take responsibility for the gangsta rap lyrics on its record labels.



May 23
The National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences adds a Grammy category for rap albums. Until now, rappers were only honored for singles.

Ice Cube, hip hop author, in *Friday*



May 31
Republican presidential candidate Bob Dole singles out 2 Live Crew and the Geto Boys as agents of depravity in American society. Neither group has released an album in the two years before Dole's attack.

June 12
Luther Campbell files for bankruptcy in Miami, citing debts of \$1.6 million and assets of less than \$50,000.

June 14
On *PrimeTime Live*, Michael Jackson and Lisa Marie Presley reveal that "yes, yes, yes," they have sex.

ICE CUBE

What was the most important thing to happen to hip hop in 1995?

"Senator Bob Dole trying to stop rap!"
—Hurricane

"The way the Wu-Tang Clan did their thing, both separately and together. They put out a lot of quality stuff."
—Dallas Austin

"The death of Easy-E. I think it was a wake-up call, not just for hip hop but the whole nation."
—Brandy

"Hip hop/rap music continued to prove it isn't just a trend, because record labels are makin' bank off of hip hop culture."
—D'Angelo

What was your favorite album of the year?

"Portishead's *Dummy*."
—Dallas Austin

"Mobb Deep's *The Infamous*."
—Raekwon

"The Notorious B.I.G.'s *Ready to Die*."
—Faith Evans

"Faith Evans's *Faith*."
—The Notorious B.I.G.

"Seal."
—Patra

"Mad Lion's *Real Ting*."
—KRS-One

"D'Angelo's *Brown Sugar*."
—Sean "Puffy" Combs

What was the best joke you heard in 1995?

"Any jokes about your mama?"
—The Luniz

"What do you call a fish with two knees? A two-knee fish."
—The Notorious B.I.G.

"It's not really a joke, but something that happened recently: I asked this guy if he wanted a cappuccino, and he said, 'No, but I'll have an Al Pacino.'"
—Patra

"C. DeLores Tucker."
—KRS-One



C. DeLores Tucker, raisin' hell



Mike Tyson and the sacrificial lamb

BY AP/WIDEWORLD

September 7
TLC's "Waterfalls" takes home three MTV Video Music Awards. Five days later, *CrazySexyCool* reaches certified sales of 6 million copies.

September 1
Sugarshaft, the "rhythm provider" for X Clan, dies of complications from AIDS at age 25.

August 25
Russell Simmons's hip hop-umentary, *The Show*, opens.

September 12
Mariah Carey's "Fantasy" remix with Ol' Dirty Bastard drops. Mariah says, "I've known him since he was L.D.B., Little Dirty Bastard."

September 27
After spending \$120 million and weathering four months of criticism, Time Warner announces that it will sell back its 50 percent of Interscope Records, which it cofounded in 1990.

October 5
UrbanAID 4 LIFE: Benefit, an Andre Harrell-organized, Live Aid-style tribute to Easy-E, takes place at New York's Madison Square Garden.

November 7
Def Jam celebrates 10 years in the music business with the scheduled release of *Classics*, a four-CD, 54-song boxed set. Included are tracks ranging from the label's first single, L.L. Cool J's "I Can't Live Without My Radio," to Warren G's 1994 hit "Regulate."

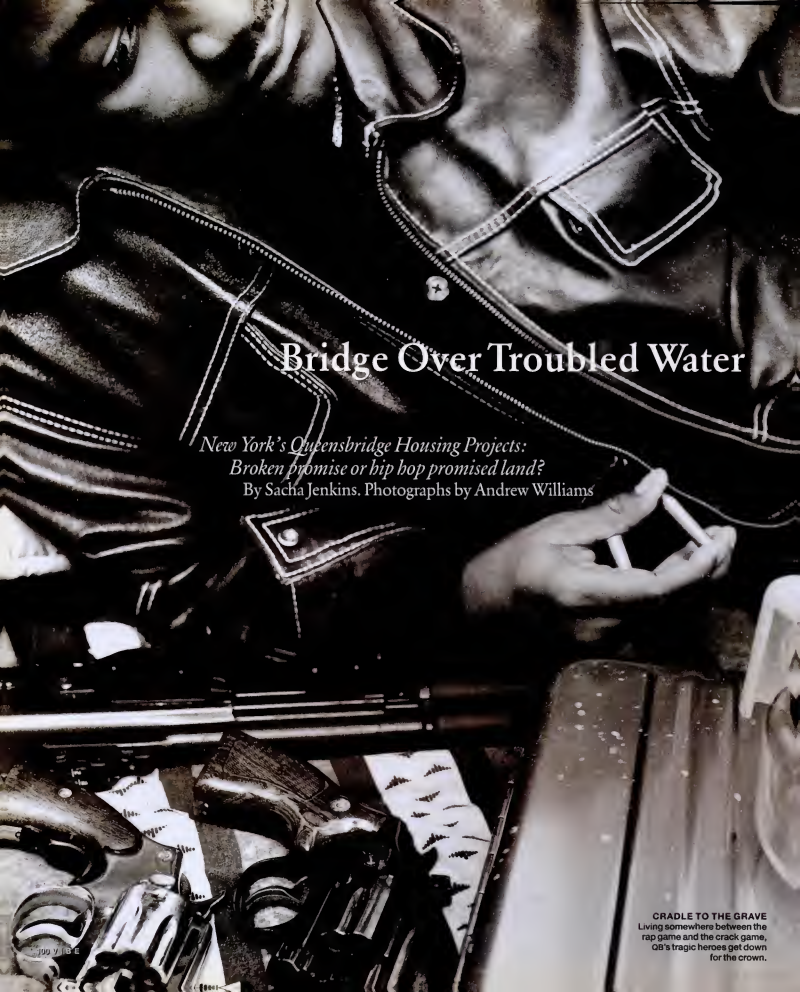
November 14
R. Kelly, R&B's reigning sex god, is scheduled to release his third album, the relatively bump-and-grindless *R. Kelly*.



The Show went on.

Additional reporting by David Bry

New York's resurgence all loom large in the nine-pound



Bridge Over Troubled Water

*New York's Queensbridge Housing Projects:
Broken promise or hip hop promised land?*

By Sacha Jenkins. Photographs by Andrew Williams

CRADLE TO THE GRAVE
Living somewhere between the
rap game and the crack game,
QB's tragic heroes get down
for the crown.

"CITY SLUM AREAS LOST SOME OF THEIR RESIDENTS YESTERDAY, AS 85 FAMILIES LEFT their dark, crowded, unsanitary flats and moved to modern, cheerful apartments in the first finished section of the Queensbridge Houses in Long Island City," announced the October 17, 1939 edition of the *New York Times*. The city's rambo-nunctious mayor, Fiorello H.

La Guardia, was on hand to christen the freshly erected, \$12 million, 49-acre communal mansion-plex. Shorties bugged at the sight of La Guardia's limousine and yearned for the big chief to flex the wonders of his mobile, which came stacked with an

ancient-school cellular. Some dreamt of the day when they too could cruise the streets of New York in a similarly dope ride.

Through the eyes of poor immigrants and sixth-generation Americans alike, the Queensbridge Houses once represented a pit stop on the road to the suburbs. The largest public housing mass in the U.S., Queensbridge was a vast improvement from the deplorable living conditions of that era's underclass. Tucked into an isolated industrial landscape, only inches away from the underbelly of the 59th Street Bridge, stood a mini-metropolis compressed into a six-block radius.

No other expanse of concentrated 'hoodscape is responsible for a parallel pool of raw, natural artistry. The Bridge is hip hop's answer to Motown.

In the late 1930s and early '40s, the diligent workers who made the parachutes, canteens, and bullets for the fearless GIs of World War II found respectable living quarters within the six-story, Y-shaped, brick-thick fortress. But 50-odd years after the inception of "the Bridge," the faces and futures of her denizens have changed dramatically. Queensbridge is no longer just a step on the ladder to the American dream, but something more permanent—a place to be born, a place to retire, a place to die. For many of the now mostly black residents, it is more like a reservation than anything else.

But despite budget cuts, body bags, and baseheads, there flourishes in Queensbridge an inconceivable amplitude of storytelling and beat-composing genius. For nearly 20 years, the DJs, MCs, and producers of Queensbridge have stepped up to get down for the crown, living somewhere between the rap game and the crack game, showing the rest of the world their world. And today more than ever, Queensbridge riotry is big business.

"Queensbridge is like a pillar when it comes to hip hop man," says Tyrone "Fly Ty" Williams, co-owner of Cold Chillin' records, a label that made most of its bread from the first generation of the QB Dynasty. Queensbridge's hip hop legacy is something the infinitely skilled MC Nasir "Nas" Jones is proud of: "Eric B. and Rakim—they developed right in one of them little apartments. Big Daddy Kane used to come and check Marley for beats. Biz Markie developed himself here. Queensbridge started so much with the music—and changed the sound."

Once upon a time in Queensbridge, there lived a hip hop pioneer responsible for the introduction of countless new talents. He was the genesis of all that was organized—the rapological godfather of Queensbridge. He was In Control, and his name was Marley Marl. Born Marlon Williams, Marley lived in Queensbridge from the days of Similac to his thirtysomething manhood.

"All I can remember are talent shows," recalls the hip hop sage. In the late '70s, Queensbridge's Jacob Riis Center served as a round-the-way midwife to a multitude of future hip hop heroes. "Disco Twins used to come out," says Marley. "Grandmaster Flash used to drop through, Bambaataa came through the Riis. It was real back then."

Street jams and throwdowns in River Park (right across

from QB) also helped develop the complex language of "yes yes y'allin' party freaks." I remember when Marlon used to come out with his speakers and turntables," says Crystal Smith, a.k.a. Dimples D, whose 1983 "Sucker DJs" made her the first Marley-produced MC to ever grace wax. "People started rhymin' on the mike," she recalls, "and I was, like, Dag, I wanna get down with that."

All was love for a while. Hip hop culture grew strong as local MCs and DJs kept shooing 'em on till the break of dawn. But as crack reared its head and society at large mutated for the worse, so did Queensbridge. "Motherfuckers came to the park just to shoot it up," says Marley. "I remember the time my man Kung-Fu Johnny got stabbed. After that, everything flipped."

While Queensbridge mourned the death of the park jams, the project's ill-thought rhymeresay linked up with Marley Marl to channel their sorrow, crying vinyl tears that radio personalities like Mr. Magic, and later Marl himself, broadcast to a burgeoning hip hop nation. "We had Magic and Marley, so when we made something, automatically it was on the radio," splashes Roxanne Shante, the whiny female rhyme animal who was in the mix a lot at age 14 with "Roxanne's Revenge." Her blow-for-blow exchange with U.T.F.O. represents a facet of hip hop culture that's been lifeless for many moons. Rivalry is the essence of hip hop, and nobody proved that point like

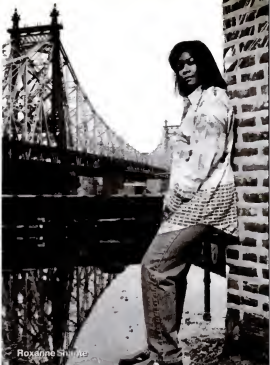


MC Shan, the unforgettable voice that carved the Bridge's place in history with his 1987 anthem "The Bridge."

"You love to hear the story again and again," echoes Shan on said track, "of how it all got started way back when." "The Bridge" has the same intensity in '95 that it had in '87, pumped back-to-back with KRS-One's "The Bridge Is Over," a reggae-flavored rhyme flurry that sought to dispel Shan's supposedly twisted taste on the origins of hip hop. Boogie Down Productions took Shan's song as a claim that hip hop had started in QB. In fact, "The Bridge" was recorded for a community event at River Park and was never intended for radio. Nonetheless, BDP sniper-fired lyrical buckshots at the Juice Crew—representin' the Bronx and settin' off chaos.

Nine years later, Shan's MC career is behind him. But just when you thought he fell off, Shan linked up with Snow, the platinum-plus, vanilla-faced ragga vocalist. "Right now, motherfuckers is probably laughing," Shan says, "but I know my man Snow gonna do all night. We saved each other. He saved me from a life of destitution, and I saved him from a life of crime." Thinking of the millions his "Informer" track earned, Shan adds boastfully, "See, motherfuckers is getting money now. Motherfuckers like me, from Queensbridge—we gettin' money. And we're moving to your neighborhood."

Meanwhile, QB's next generation has shit on lock, thanks to latter-day prophets like Nas and apocalypse journalists like Mobb Deep. "I sip the Dom P. watching



Gandhi till I'm charged / Writing in my book of rhymes all the words pass the margins," chatters Nas on "The World Is Yours," a joint off his critically acclaimed LP *Illmatic*. Swave, dapper, and dice-smart, Nas maintains professor status inside the logic of hip hop's new mathematics, pushing conventional rhyme possibilities well into the next millennium.

"I think we loved 'The Bridge Is Over' more than anybody else," says Nas, who was just a shortly when he first heard the opening shot. "It was like a war goin' on. That really revolutionized hip hop. KRS-One was sayin', 'This shit is real, and if you're gonna say something on a record, you better mean it, or else your bluff will be called.'"

"They was rhymin' about parties and all that shit," says Mobb Deep's Havoc of QB's founding fathers. "Shit has changed, yo. Niggas is gettin' shot on a regular. You could have rapped about anything and got off back then. You can't do that now." On the thugside of reality, Mobb Deep jump out of the piss-misted darkness of a neglected project lobby with gats, razors, and product to be slanged. Their poetic dialogue is deadly, articulate, and steadfastly honest—an audio documentary shot through the gunscopes of underworld-fluent black masks. "As long as fiends smoke crack," drones an impassioned Havoc on "Survival of the Fittest," a cut from Mobb's second full-length effort, *The Infamous*, "no matter how much loot I make, I'm staying in the projects—forever."

On hot summer days, seniors occupy the tree-lined pastages that loop through the 'hood like that frosted maze in *The Shining*. Old folks sit sunny-faced on the very same benches that support hustlers after night bumrushes the city. Chess is the game of choice for these advanced students of Miles, Mingus, and Mahalia—you can catch them out there on the regular, workin' the outdoor cement-cast checkerboards by the Jacob Riis Center. Weathered fingertips abduct black and white kings and queens as inaudible breakbeats rock on and phantom MCs whisper in the tranquil shadows of the empty Riis stage. "Checkmate."

Meanwhile, quivering Aunt Jemima-lookin', bandanna-draped sisters squirm about in a limp phase for the base. A crew of crack hoes patrol the lifeless pavement of 22nd



The light is definitely on.

Mod beats. Fly people.

Serious partying. It's the

COORS LIGHTSHOW.

And it's closer than you think.

Get with the COORS LIGHTSHOW

broadcast on BET. If you're in

New York or Atlanta, you might

even get there in person. The

COORS LIGHTSHOW.

It's all that.

Coors
LIGHT



Street—between 40th and 41st Avenues—ready to plunge into strangers' cars and facilitate fellatio. Once healthy, now drunk and dusted, forgotten fathers loom under bodice canopies that flash with Christmas lights 24-7. Once upon a time in the projects.

Chick Alston, an outreach coordinator at Jacob Riis (and reformed drug addict) who's lived in the Bridge most of his life, says that the projects have become "a police state. It's gotten to that point because of community apathy. The adults are disillusioned with the young people—they want them off the streets. You can be sitting outside night now, and a cop will say, 'All right, get up against the wall—empty your pockets.' If this was another community, an adult would say, 'What are you grabbing that young man for?'"

"It's sad, man," Nas says of his home. "A lot of people turned out on heroin, mad people turned out on crack. So many people out there tryin' to get these drugs—so many people usin' them. And then you sell them devil policemen that's ridin' around shootin' niggas. The beast—they runnin' around like it's Vietnam. They out there to patrol us like animals in a zoo."

MC Tec (a.k.a. Terence Stockton) is a 35-year-old father of three who's lived in Queensbridge with his wife, Ellen, for more than a decade. Tec was once signed to Profile Records with his then partner, Lord Tashcum, but got

the time. They ask if you have dirty grease on your stove. They use it for freezing or to put on their skin. They ask for meat out your fryer—people you don't even know."

She says the changes began in the late '80s when Queensbridge began admitting single parents. "They wasn't really checkin' people's background," she says. "I pay \$750 a month for this apartment," says the hospital-worker's mother. "My neighbors have the same amount of kids. They stay home every day and then pay \$153 for the same apartment. They take my taxes, pay her rent, and she gets the fringe benefits. That makes me very angry with the system—I go with the Republicans when it comes to that."

As anyone in Queensbridge about Percy Chapman—a.k.a. Tragedy or the Intelligent Hoodlum—and they'll tell you he's come a long way from his days of mayhem. The baby wild child of the Juice Crew fraternity (Marley, Shan, Roxanne, Craig G, Biz Markie, Kool G Rap and DJ Polo, Kane, and Masta Ace) has developed quite a rep in his 24 years on the planet. The earliest memories of Tragedy, he blasts Nas, "was Trag buggin' out, runnin' through the projects on a mission. He's been in some deep dungeon shit in the projects, and I'm happy to see the brother still here."

After waiting 45 minutes for Trag to show up at the Q train station, in the heart of the Bridge, this reporter decided to jet around town to see if I could find my missing pastoral guide. After almost giving up, I found a squinty-eyed Trag, and his man Ki Capone, in a convenience store.

"What happened?" I asked. "Where was you at, yo?" "I saw you, yo," he retorted. "I was watching you from the roof with Capone." Before I could interject, he explained: "Because niggas be shook—they be afraid to come to the Bridge. I saw you walk around the projects."

From then on, Trag maintained a safe distance from which he could study my every move. "So you wanna write about the projects?" he asked with measured sarcasm. "You on some journalist shit—some old Bosnia-type shit. You wanna see niggas gettin' bent, niggas slangin' and bustin' caps?" Trag has come full circle—from scrambler, to artist, to behind-the-scenes heavy with a job at Columbia Records. He says labels want to sign him again, but he's not interested.

I followed his lead that scorching Friday night, walking through hordes of his peoples—hustling, conversing, coolin' out on the moss green benches. We ended up at Ki Capone's house, where the pair kicked vibrant freestyles together. They're a lot alike: Both spent time "up north" in state prisons (Percy for robbery; Capone for shooting a cop at age 15), and both are celebrated veterans of the Queensbridge wars. That's why I was a little surprised to see tears welling in Tragedy's eyes when

he heard "Grand Groove," a joint from his own last album that pays homage to lives lost.

"You can't walk the street and depend on it at the same time," said an emotional Intelligent Hoodlum later, "because the street will never love you, yo. The street is like a hooker with AIDS with a nice body and beautiful face. She's gonna be there to cater to you. If my girl shit on me right now, my peoples shit on me, I could still walk the street. But she don't love me either. Because if I take off my clothes, and lay on the street...she's cold, she's dirty. She ain't gonna love me back."

After a rigorous freestyle session, Trag reclined on the plastic-covered couch, one hand on the silver briefcase that he lugs to his job. Then he dozed off, the sounds of "Grand Groove" caressing him into never-never land.

Queensbridge is the essence of hip-hop—splendid, multifaceted, handsome, and sometimes grotesque. Maybe it's the massive Con Edison electrical plant next to River Park that charges the minds of the Bridge's word-slingers, or maybe the swiling might of the East River helps keep the turntables spinning. You can't blame this on nepotism—Nas ain't "get put on because of MC Shan. Maybe it's the isolation, the view of the Manhattan skyline just across the river, the feeling of being on the verge that fuels the determination of the Bridge's scarred babies. Whatever the reason, more than a decade after Dimples D kicked "Sucker DJs," the Bridge is definitely not over.

"The 'hood ain't gonna do nothin' but get more rugged," foresees Noyd, another QB trooper who recently inked a healthy contract with Tommy Boy Records on the strength of a few performances on Mobb's album. Queensbridge's mike trots crosses hands and lips like a tall bottle

of malt liquor among a crew of lint-pocketed friends. The emergence of unsigned strangers like Capone & Noreaga (a backstreet duo with slamin' flow skills) and L.E.S. (the producer behind AZ's gold-selling single "Sugar Hill"), and the reemergence of Cor-Mega (a respected QB verbalist who's free again after time served), promise to maintain the oral traditions set to wax by their project-educated predecessors. But where are QB's forefathers now? "I'm a strong mutha-

fucker," says 30-year-old MC Shan of his ups and downs in the rap game. "I wasn't gonna let people tell me, 'Shan, you ain't no good.'" It has long been rumored that much of Shan's profits went in on crack smoke. "Drugs never overtook me," is his reply. "I could be smoking crack right now, and you wouldn't even know. I was always a thin muthafucker." For better or worse, even those who get paid never seem to stray far from the old neighborhood. "This place is a jail with invisible fences," says lifelong Bridgerider DJ Hot Day. "You can get locked in if you don't know how to get out."

And where will Nas be five years from now, when a whole new wave of Queensbridge MCs rise? "I'm gonna be laid up somewhere, smokin' a Philly," he speculates, "buggin' the fuck out in the corner somewhere. With a drop-top Lexus, drivin' to my motherfuckin' office building underneath the fuckin' White House." □



dropped from the label around 1988. Then Terence fell back into his old ways—flippin' blow.

"It was hard in the beginning," murmurs a very pregnant Ellen. "Even though he never offered me drugs or anything like that, it affected me in a lot of ways. I had to make a plan—for the kids, for myself. It was easy money, so I had to force him into making a change. He had to stop selling drugs, or we would break up."

These days, MC Tec's into a different type of dope dealin'—slangin' the dope beats he concocts in his living room sound lab for many of QB's poetically gifted young wordslingers. Plus his marriage is stronger than ever. What could be better?

Ellen remembers when life in these projects was a lot better. "It was a nice, clean environment," says Mrs. Stockton, who hates the destitute place Queensbridge has become. "People come and beg on our doorstep all



Anderson, Jackson and Stearn
{attorneys at Law}

out of
UNIFORM

Reebok 
CLASSIC



BAYWATCH



San Francisco's
JT the Bigga Figga

106 VIBE

Photo: [illegible]

BY
JASON
FINE

INDEPENDENT SPIRIT, HARDCORE FANS, AND GREAT MUSIC KEEP NORTHERN CALIFORNIA HIP HOP FROM SLIPPING ON SHAKY GROUND

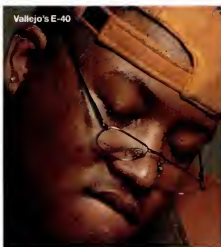
Since the days when Too Short was selling tapes from the trunk of his car (a deed that has since taken on mythic proportions) and Hammer was dancing with his crew at Sweet Jimmie's, Oakland has been the center of Bay Area hip hop. These days, though, while Souls of Mischief are sophomore-slumping and Digital have gone underground, a whole new crew of artists from Northern California—along with loyal fans and scrappy independent labels—are combining to reinforce the region's reputation as a hip hop mecca. "What's going on here," says Chris Graham, co-owner of Oakland's Dogday Records, "isn't happening anywhere else."

What's happening mostly is great music: This past year, Dru Down's big hit "Mack of the Year" rocked long and hard, and the Luniz (certified gold) "I Got 5 on It" is still blasting out of car speakers up and down Oakland's bustling San Pablo Avenue—and all over the country. Paris's Scarface Records is undergoing a "reorganization," but its top act, the Conscious Daughters, has an album due this spring. "There are visible success stories here in the Bay," says Dave "Davey D" Cook, community affairs director for KMEI, one of the Bay's "urban" outlets and among the most powerful stations in the country. "From Sly & the Family Stone to Metallica to Too Short. There's a feeling here that you can do your own thing and make it."

Eight blocks west of San Francisco's city hall, the town's Fillmore district stretches out in a ragged grid of housing projects, graffiti-covered corner stores, and sagging, subdivided Victorian houses. Once a thriving community, "urban renewal" projects long ago bulldozed the neighborhood's jazz clubs, youth centers, and community gardens—pretty much leaving the 'Mo, as it's often called, for broke. These days, a new generation of young Fillmore musicians have some urban revitalization plans of their own.

"This place is about music, man," says 4-Tay of his hometown, kicking back on a black Naugahyde couch at his "Playaz Club," a one-bedroom apartment deep in the Fillmore. He's just back from the MTV Video Music Awards, where his clip for "I'll Be Around" was nominated for Best Rap Video.

Since busting out of the Bay with "Playaz Club" and "I'll Be Around" from this year's *Don't Fight the Feelin'*, 4-Tay has established himself, along with Long Beach's Warren G and Vallejo's



Vallejo's E-40



4-Tay in the 'Mo



Hunter's Pointz 11/6

E-40, as one of the most innovative voices of West Coast rap. "I want to mix it up and try new things," he says, "but still keep it as real as I can."

A few blocks from 4-Tay's apartment, JT the Bigga Bigga Blunts has his own record company, Get Low Records, and operates a 48-track studio called the Labb. "My first tapes I made in my room, and then manufactured a couple thousand copies with my own money," he says of his not-so-long-ago beginnings. "I've learned how to create this music and generate my own financial statements." His new disc, appropriately titled *Duettin' in the Labb*, is full of lyrical acrobatics and sparkling production.

And across town, in the Hunter's Point area, Herm Lewis's Black Power Productions is getting attention for *Still Trying to Survive in the Ghetto*, the follow-up to 1994's *Trying to Survive in the Ghetto*, a compilation featuring a bunch of way-underground S.F. rappers. Rough-'n'-ready Hunter's Point is also home to 11/5 and U.D.I. (Under Da Influence), both signed to Dogday Records. 11/5 sold an amazing 75,000 copies of *Fiendin' a tha Funk* without a major distributor—and Chris Graham knows why. "There's no other place in the country where you can make as much noise on an independent level," he says, crediting unusually strong support from local radio and retailers. "Houston and Atlanta have indie scenes, but the Bay has more than just indie labels—it has indie everything."

Vallejo is a sleepy suburban town 30 miles north of Oakland. Besides E-40, it's also home to local heroes NaDEEP, Potna Deuce, and Mac Mall. E's 1995 *In a Major Way* gained him a bunch of non-Cal fans, but he and his Click have been running things in the Bay for quite a while.

"Back in, like, '90, no one would listen to my tape," he says with a laugh. "They were, like, 'Vallejo—what's that?' We gave tapes away in parks, auto shops, everywhere." The gregarious MC is also founder and president of Sick Wid It Records.

Back across the 15-mile bridge that connects the East Bay and San Francisco, the sun is setting and 4-Tay is sitting in his cherry black 1966 Buick convertible, listening to tunes from his upcoming album. Sometimes the competitive rift between S.F. and Oakland is as deep (and ridiculous) as the one that exists between the Pacific and Atlantic coasts. 4-Tay has hope, though.

"All those playa hatz who differentiate between the East and the West got to cut that bullshit out," he says with a smile. "And if somebody got something to say about it—I'll see 'em at the Playaz Club." □

A full-page photograph of a woman standing in front of a city skyline at night. She is wearing a white jumpsuit with a wide collar and a black belt, and a white visor. She has her hands on her hips and is looking towards the camera. The background is a bright, hazy cityscape with lights reflecting on a body of water.

SUGA: White flight suit \$590
by Giorgio Armani NEVE, Pro-
Frame goggles by Oakley

Cold Chillin'

Snowboarding, skiing, and hip hop are some of the most dangerous sports in the world. So on the mean streets of New York City, bubble jackets, polar fleece hoodies, and nylon jumpsuits help keep it real warm

Photographs by **Daniel Hastings/Cartel**
Styling by **Emil Wilhekin**

VIBEmag

Q-TIP

Indy
Interchange 5
coat \$185 and
men's suspender
jean \$105, both
by Columbia
Sportswear, brown
fleece hooded
pullover \$85
by Phat Farm

VIBE 109

JUNIOR MAFIA (from left):

KLEPTO: Maize-and-blue down parka \$150 and matching racing bib \$150, both by Helly Hansen; polar fleece lining with zipper \$50 by Boss; black hat by Adidas; goggles by Mustang

LARCENY: Navy nylon hooded coat \$245 by Nautica; Futur ski goggles by Bell

TRIFE: Navy nylon jacket with green polar fleece lining \$225 and navy fleece sweatshirt \$86, both by Nautica; sunglasses by Oakley

LITTLE KIM: Red silk down jacket \$1 \$55 and black stretch turtleneck \$375, both by Isaac Mizrahi





BUGSEY. Blue quilted down coat \$425 and blue polar fleece T-neck lining \$195, both by DKNY goggles by Oakley

CAPONE. Navy nylon pullover \$325 by Giorgio Armani NEVE, reflective parka \$910, navy overalls \$319, all by Giorgio Armani NEVE, two-frame goggles by Oakley

LITTLE CAESAR. Silver summit suit \$760 by The North Face, futur ski goggles by Bollé

NINO. Black and blue summer suit \$760 by The North Face, futur ski goggles by Bollé

CHEEK. Blue and black quilted coat approximately \$280 and headband, both by Bear goggles by Bollé

NAUTIC

DAS EFX (from left):

DRAY: Fleece-hooded sweatshirt \$85 by Phat Farm, Chrono PD ski goggles by Bolle

SKOOR: Hooded "1963" sweatshirt \$96 and Norpoles "Dates" jacket \$190, both by PNB Nation; headband by Bear





KOOL KEITH:
Yellow, blue,
and white coat \$300,
polar fleece scuba
jacket \$150, and
ski pant \$150, all by
Mecca U.S.A.; ski cap
by Kangol; goggles
by Mustang

Michael Rapaport, costar of Woody Allen's sexy tragicomedy *Mighty Aphrodite*, says he's a romantic sort. He also says he's got a bit of a quick temper, that he's sometimes self-centered, judgmental, and insecure. "But I'm aware of it," says the 25-year-old native New Yorker. "So I can improve."

And he has. With each film he appears in, Rapaport gets more perfectly dishonest, sweet, unbalanced—whatever. If he is required to play it, he becomes it.

"I was *not* funny," he says of his early career as a stand-up comedian. But when a casting agent saw him, Rapaport ended up in a 1992 episode of *China Beach*. "I knew right away," he says in his soft-spoken but distinctly Queens accent, "I'd found something that I have a passion for."

The young star sparkled as the lead in 1992's Oliver Stone-produced *Zebrahead*, his first professional film role. Though he appeared to be portraying a slightly less manic version of MC Serch, Rapaport's subtly intense scenes with N'Bushe Wright captured all the awkward minutiae of interracial dating. Since then, he's more than held his own as a gullible loser in *True Romance* (with Christian Slater), a murderous neophyte skinhead in John Singleton's *Higher Learning* (with Ice Cube), and a crook who gets his comeuppance in *Kiss of Death* (with Nicolas Cage). Now he's shining as a lovably dumb jock whom Woody fixes up with a struggling porn star in *Aphrodite*. "I play a boxer," says the gangly redhead, who was as excited to work with Allen as he was to work with Singleton. "My adrenaline was pumping the whole time."

But this past summer, Rapaport was calm. In his own words, he's an old soul. A real hip hop head, he loves old rhythm and blues as well—but contemporary R&B rubs him the wrong way. "How can you listen to Stevie Wonder," he says, "and then turn on the radio and hear about booty calls?" Guess that's why he feels like a romantic. Michael Rapaport talks much about the importance of feeling fulfilled. And he talks a lot about loving his work. "I am romantic," he playfully insists. "About life, family, New York City. I'm romantic about it all."

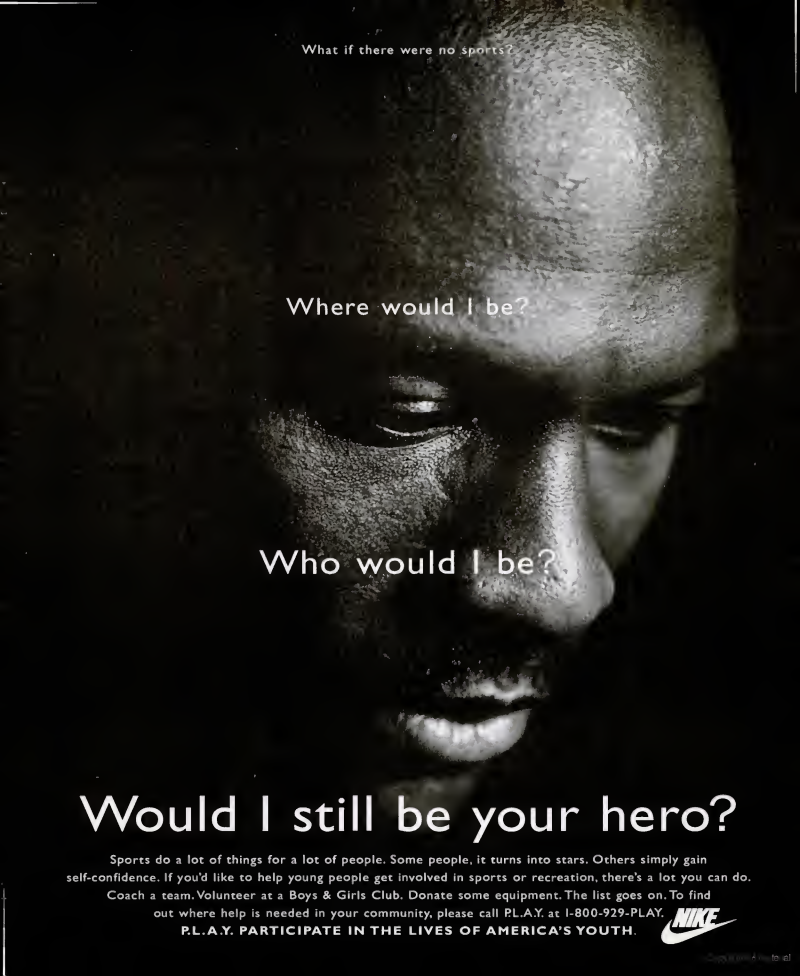
Danyel Smith



MICHAEL RAPAPORT

True Romantic

PHOTOGRAPH BY BARRON CLAIBORNE



What if there were no sports?

Where would I be?

Who would I be?

Would I still be your hero?

Sports do a lot of things for a lot of people. Some people, it turns into stars. Others simply gain self-confidence. If you'd like to help young people get involved in sports or recreation, there's a lot you can do.

Coach a team. Volunteer at a Boys & Girls Club. Donate some equipment. The list goes on. To find out where help is needed in your community, please call P.L.A.Y. at 1-800-929-PLAY.

P.L.A.Y. PARTICIPATE IN THE LIVES OF AMERICA'S YOUTH.



VIVA VANESSA

"My mother wishes I hadn't been a porn star, but my aunt has a cheesecake picture right there with all her saints. Protecting me!"



Del Rio of Dreams

How Vanessa the Undressa made the tricky transition from adult film diva to woman in love. By Robert Morales.
Photographs by Christian Witkin/B.O.A.

If she's pushing 45, Vanessa del Rio needs to push a whole lot harder. A recent visit by the adult film diva to VIBE's international headquarters left even the most hard-bitten of our work-release journalists with their jaws hanging open. She signed autographs, posed for photos with any deadbeat who asked, and graciously answered all questions asked of her that didn't concern her age. "It's my only secret," she says.

Born Ana Maria [last name withheld] in Harlem of Cuban and Puerto Rican parents, del Rio grew up a hardcore Catholic in the Bronx. After a wrong turn as a computer programmer in her twenties, she listened to her inner voice and hightailed it south to become a waitress, then barmaid, then go-go dancer. "I have no regrets," she says. "I had fun. It was the '70s going into the '80s—basically sex, drugs, rock 'n' roll, and disco. But I wasn't all that whacked-out; I was always in control being out of control." Back in the Apple, Vanessa got into porn out of pure pragmatism: "They were paying \$150 a day, and that was *exactly* my half of the rent." Ah, youth.

Asked how many films she's made overall, del Rio blithely replies "only 100." "You know what?" she asks. "In 12 years, 100 is not a lot. I met someone in the business who's made 112 in *two* years." Vanessa easily stood out among the porn personalities who strayed into mainstream American talk show culture (she was recognizable enough to play herself as a sexual adviser in *Deep Inside Vanessa del Rio*). She was incredibly funny, often *during* her sex scenes—peep her dressed like Carmen Miranda while she mauls a midget on a piano at the climax of a musical number in *Play Me Again, Vanessa*.

And she was, of course, the first regularly featured, nonwhite X icon. The quasi-legitimacy of pornography followed on the heels of the blaxploitation film explosion—and del Rio was the logical screen successor to Pam Grier. She was self-possessed, wilful yet never vulgar, capable of making a particularly American kind of outlaw glamour accessible to the masses in a decade that ultimately gave birth to punk and rap.

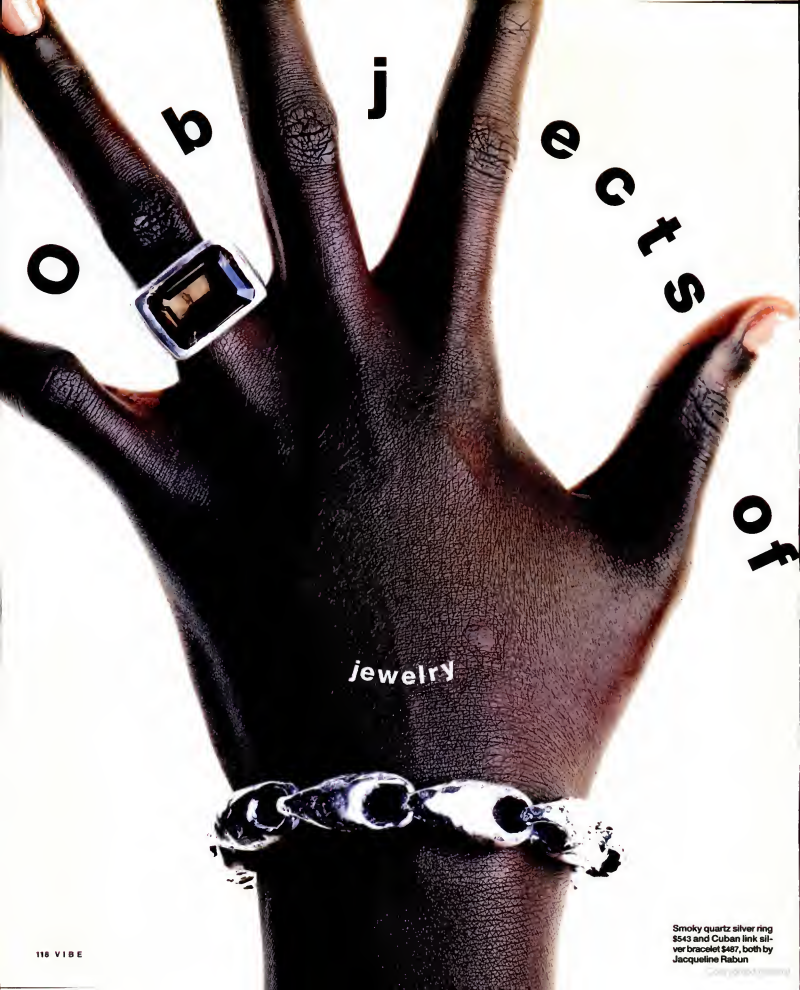
She quit the business 10 years ago, thanks to burnout, the threat of AIDS, and... "I had some trouble with the law," she admits. Translation: A Bible Belt obscenity charge got upgraded to drug possession during a routine search. "I spent a month in jail, and that straightened my ass out," she says. "I had some time to reflect on where I was going with my life. I started to think about my health and began exercising." She did a few more films to pave the way for retirement. Then came a stint as a bodybuilder, and then she went back to dancing. "Then I opened my own can of worms. I was very conflicted. That's when I decided, I don't *want* to be Vanessa del Rio!"

Did she feel pressure from her family? She shrugs, laughing. "It's my nature to be rebellious—I never got any slack. My mother wishes I hadn't done it, but my aunt actually calls me Vanessa. She has a real cheesecake picture—kissy face, low cleavage—right there with flowers on it and all her saints. Protecting me!"

Nowadays Vanessa's amazed at how young many of her fans are: "A lot of them say they found me in their parents' video collections." That she's had more shout-outs from rappers—from Digital Underground to Little Kim of Junior M.A.F.I.A., who boasts, implausibly, "I'll do things to you Vanessa del Rio be ashamed to do"—than any other porn star hasn't hurt either. Coming upon Chubb Rock while channel surfing threw her for a loop. "Suddenly, there's this guy going, 'She went all *Vanessa del Rio* on me,' and I'm thinking, Hmmm, what does *that* mean?" She laughs merrily. "I'm sitting there, *playing* the Box so I can see it again and decide it was okay."

It so happens Vanessa has started her comeback: magazine layouts, live appearances, a fan club (for info and "personal items," write: VDR Fan Club, 309 Fifth Avenue, Suite 234, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11215)—and a new, as-yet-untitled movie, which she's directing and hopes to distribute herself. (She doesn't get residuals from her past labors.) "I play an interplanetary psychiatrist who narrates the film," del Rio says, straight-faced, then explains that her part won't be as, um, *active* as in the past. "I don't buy Russian roulette. You just don't know—a test is *nothing* to me." Having left the business just as AIDS was becoming a concern, she's astonished how many of her contemporaries are still alive. As for her own film, "We're looking for couples, and we'll be doing safe sex."

After many attempts, del Rio's finally in a successful, physically and emotionally monogamous relationship with a guy named Vito, whom she'll only describe as being Italian and "in clothing." She continues, "Being in love has shown me who I am, because when someone accepts you, it makes you stop and think, Gee, maybe I'm *not* so bad—and you keep looking further. It's like holding a mirror up." She's dumbstruck to be alive and happy, to have graduated from pin-up babe to poster child for bliss. "I mean, it sounds clichéd, 'Love conquers all,'" she says. "It *doesn't*, but it gives you a sense of self. And you learn to work from there. I learned to like Vanessa." □



O

b

j

e

c

t

s

of

jewelry

Smoky quartz silver ring
\$540 and Cuban link silver
bracelet \$487, both by
Jacqueline Rabun

Fleece headband \$12
and fleece hoodie \$144,
both by Karl Kani

VIBEstyle

sportswear



Desire

This holiday season, top designers created clothing and accessories that are luxurious, well made, stylish—and can stand the test of time. Photographs by Mark Mattock. Styling by Derick Procope

Single-breasted suit \$395,
wool vest \$100, cotton dress
shirt \$48, and necktie, all by
Tommy Hilfiger

coat, vest, and suit



sunglasses

Umbra No. 108
sunglasses \$350 by Kata

V I D E 121

Gore-Tex hiking boot S210 by Bear



hiking boot



furgora hat

knee-length trench coat

Tram leather
trench coat \$1,900
by Industria;
Jennifer hat \$60
by Kiangol

Sista friends

The L.A. ladies, all born in 1973, have a sisterly bond that they see as a matter of fate. "When we met, we couldn't believe how much we had in common," says Mo, her expressive eyes buggin' up a notch. "We all worked at McDonald's, had birthdays in September, wrote songs, danced, and loved hip hop." Adds Stef, "We're just too much alike not to have hooked up with each other." *Deborah Gregory*

PHOTOGRAPH BY ZULEMA JACOME



Is It Better To Give Or Receive?

Taste royalty. Crown Royal

Those who appreciate quality enjoy it responsibly.

©1995 Joseph E. Seagram and Sons, New York, N.Y.
Blended Canadian Whisky. 40% alcohol by volume (80 proof).



**HOP HOP JOINT**

100% cotton. Metallic gold with gold studs. Sizes L-XL \$17.95, XXL \$18.95. Shipping and handling \$4.00 (\$1.00 each additional shirt). Send check or money order to: HOP HOP JOINT, 9016 Wilshire Blvd. #408, Beverly Hills, CA 90211. 2 day priority shipping!

MOTOWN!

On the shelves RIGHT NOW are the perfect Motown Box Sets to warm up the chill-est of winters. What could spice up any holiday better than the sounds of Marvin Gaye, The Jackson 5, Diana Ross, Smokey Robinson & The Miracles, and the 2 Hitsville Singles collections? It's the perfect gift for your Mama and your Papa!



Heat up your ho ...hottest gift id

**IRIE REGGAE, LTD.**

For the best in Reggae Music cassettes and CDs. Also latest IRIE REGGAE casual wear, T-shirts, hats, golf shirts and accessories. Featuring IRIE REGGAE leather jackets. Call IRIE REGGAE: 1-800-484-7263 ext. 5008.

KONAMI

Konami video games make a fantastic gift for the holidays. Be on the lookout for NBA "Give 'N Go". A conversion of our hit arcade game, "Give 'N Go" offers five-on-five realistic basketball action with the NBA players and teams. Be sure to visit Konami's website www.konami.com





THE ATLANTIC GROUP

Give a present that represents (all styles, moods, tastes) music from Atlantic Records: *BRANDY*, JUNIOR M.A.F.I.A. - *CONSPIRACY*, HOOTIE & THE BLOWFISH - *CRACKED REAR VIEW*, INTRO - *NEW LIFE*, JAMES CARTER - *THE REAL QUIET STORM*, AN ALL-4-ONE *CHRISTMAS*.

To order, call J&R: (800)221-8180.

THE ATLANTIC GROUP 1995 ATLANTIC RECORDING CORP. A TIME WARNER COMPANY

ACCLAIM

NFL Quarterback Club '96. It's the ultimate in football realism! Drive for the goal with over 800 plays, 80 yards of viewable field and authentic QB signature plays! All the teams, all the top QB's, all the players and game systems that count!

Super NES® • Genesis™ • Game Boy® • Game Gear™
Saturn™ • PlayStation™ • PC-CD ROM



idays with the... eas from VIBE

PLAYER'S UNIVERSITY™ BY KENLO

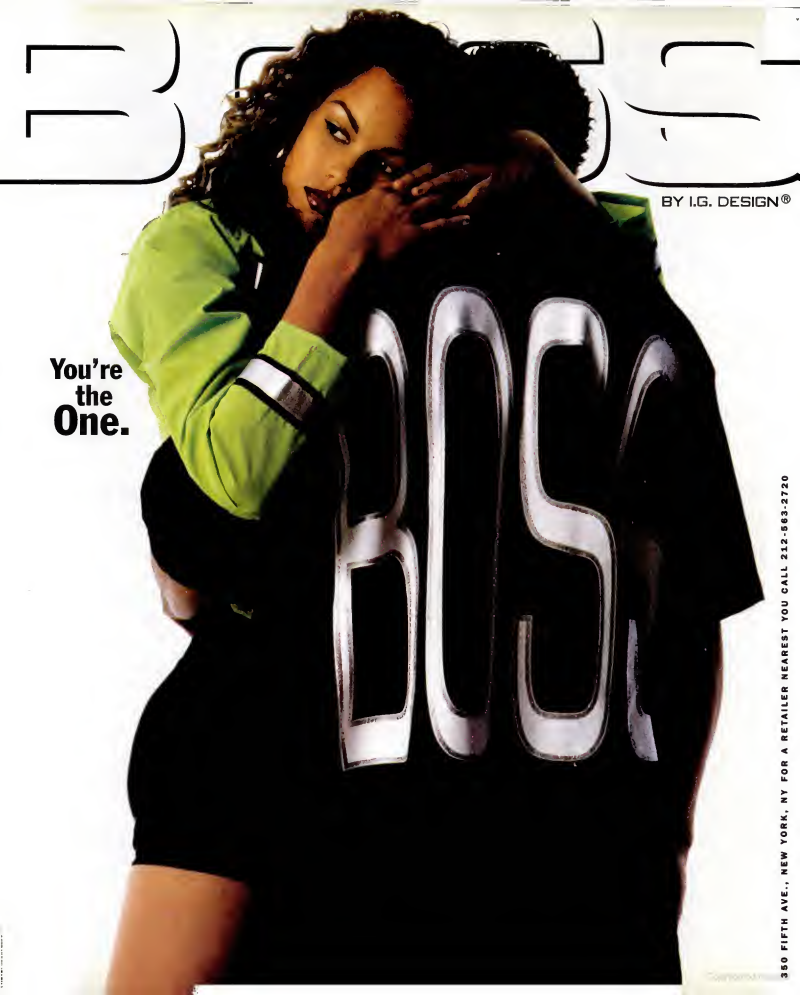
A MUST FOR A TRUE PLAYER! Tees only \$16.95

Send Money Orders only to: KenLo Inc., 6480 Chupp Road.
#C-1, Lithonia, GA 30058 • VISA/MC orders call (404) 484-9560 Get a KenLo Authentic NOW!

*Price includes shipping & handling. Offer expires 1/31/96



WIDE POWER BOON. Feeling low because you missed the inaugural VIBE music seminar? Don't. You can attend next year, and still get a copy of the seminar program: revolution sound & vision. Read thoughtful, pointed essays written by industry professionals as well as your favorite Vibe contributors. Motown's new president Andre Harrell talks about how he picks hits. Others talk about the reggae industry, film, success... the list goes on and on. Send Cashiers Check or Money Order for \$5 to Vibe magazine, c/o Power Book, 205 Lexington Ave., New York, NY 10016. While supplies last.



BY I.G. DESIGN®

**You're
the
One.**

350 FIFTH AVE., NEW YORK, NY FOR A RETAILER NEAREST YOU CALL 212-563-2720

Lauren Vélez

The first thing Lauren Vélez, *New York Undercover*'s new cop on the block, does when she hits her dressing room at the end of a day's taping is salsa. After dancing away the tough facade of her character, detective Nina Moreno—and the on-the-job ordeals both outside and inside the testosterone-heavy precinct where Moreno works—Vélez reflects on her new part. "Nina has to take a lot of mierda," she says, "because she's a Latin woman in the force."

The 10-year acting veteran's own journey to the middle has been no salsa-filled night at the Copa, either. Though Vélez landed her first starring role in *I Like It Like That*, last year's critically acclaimed comedy directed by Darnell Martin, the roles didn't necessarily start pouring in. "People don't know what to do with me in this business," says the spicy, Brooklyn-born beauty. "I'm dark, but I'm Puerto Rican—and there is still a lot of stereotypical casting going on. If the role calls for a Latina, they get a light-skinned one."

For all the Cannes hoopla that Martin's film created, Vélez soon found herself back at her hostess job at the New York club Tatou. Last December—eight months later—she landed a small role as a grieving widow (of a cop) in the film *City Hall*, starring Al Pacino, which is scheduled to be released in early '96. Then, nada. Vélez's present euphoria can be attributed to finally landing a steady gig this past August—in her hometown—on the hottest show on TV. "I've been so blessed to land work here," exclaims the die-hard New Yorker. "I can't imagine living where I can't get my *café con leche* and Goya crackers in the morning. I like my bodega!"

Deborah Gregory

Look



shoot jamecia 'keep it real'

Text and photos by Lisa Leone

Jamecia didn't want the typical love story for her new video, "Keep It Real"—she just wanted to have fun. "I wanted to do something you do every day, like kickin' it," she says, while kickin' it between takes on the set. "I'm not hangin' on a guy, I'm talking to the guys. You need to keep the mystery—men like mystery. Besides," she continues, "my daughter is seven, so I want to be a good example and keep it clean."

The video unfolds like a photo essay, mixing various shots of Jamecia. It consists of six setups: In two of them, she's featured by herself; one has a little hangout vibe featuring her cousin Kwana and some friends; and two are straight-up fashion sets. "I wanted to create a balance with beauty shots and some wicked fashion," director Mark Humphrey adds. "It's taking street fashion to a different level: street couture."

The final setup is a party scene; the location is a loft in SoHo. There's a couple dancing, another couple sitting on a couch, and a guy playing drums. Suddenly, Busta Rhymes comes to pay a visit along with Bazaar, Common, and Mr. Black, a new artist who did the remix version of the song. It feels like a real party.

Jamecia's in make-up when a song comes on that lights up her face. "That's my mom!" It's Sounds of Blackness, of whom her mother, Ann Bennett Nesby, is the lead singer. "My mom has encouraged me a lot. She taught me how to compose and sing all the different harmonies. I do all the backgrounds on my album," says Jamecia, who's also sung backup for Janet Jackson, Johnny Gill, and Alexander O'Neal. "My bosses at home, Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis, have also taught me a lot—about writing, adding stuff, listening at home, and going back to fix it," she continues. "My work is never done; I'm always thinking how to make it better."



ten years later kool g rap

Back in '86, the Queens-based duo Kool G Rap and DJ Polo blew the heads off of hip hop kids with their debut single, "It's a Demo." The subsequent *Road to Riches* album established Kool G Rap (the Kool Genius of Rap) as a legend.

Noted as one of the nastiest MCs and one of the first gangsta rappers, Kool G Rap ripped the mike on three albums with songs like "Ill Street Blues," "Talk Like Sex," and "Poison." He also starred on the classic posse cut "The Symphony" from Marley Marl's 1988 *In Control* compilation and made a cameo in the movie *Who's the Man?*

Ten years later, Kool G Rap and DJ Polo have gone their separate ways, but both are still doing their thing. G Rap has come back strong with a fourth album, 4.5.6. He is also the owner of Dark Alley Productions, a record production company. DJ Polo has released a single called "Freak of the Week" featuring adult-movie star Ron Jeremy, and he has a radio talk show in Cleveland. In a rap world full of real G's and fake G's, it's time for all MCs to pay homage to the Kool G.

The Blackspot



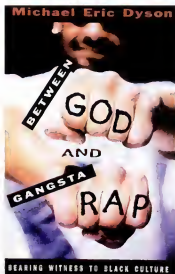
scent men's fragrances

Let's just admit it. Men like to be pampered as much as women—even if it's on the down low. Case in point: four new men's fragrances that offer men more options at the cosmetics counter. Just check out the (designers' own) descriptions of the following: There's "fresh and invigorating" Hugo, "intimate and smooth" Joop Homme, Dolce & Gabbana Pour Homme ("warm and sensuous"), and DK Men ("energy and emotion"). With such promising imagery, how can you lose? Besides, you know what they say: You catch more flies with honey—but not too much honey, please.

word 'between god and gangsta rap'

If you're a member of the hip hop community who's fed up with critics attacking the genre and vilifying its artists, Michael Eric Dyson's latest book, *Between God and Gangsta Rap* (Oxford University Press), provides long-sought-after relief. In this insightful collection of essays, Dyson, a professor of communications at the University of North Carolina, Baptist minister, VIBE contributor, and self-described "public intellectual," explores and celebrates all facets of black culture, from the critical role of preachers to the brilliance of Chuck D. Most importantly, Dyson's words flesh out how our lives are defined

"between the secular and the sacred," and probe conditions that cause gangsta rap's anger. This brother's sermon is a must-read. *Shari Saxon*



actress Jennifer Lopez

Jennifer Lopez is a lot like that rose in Spanish Harlem—except she's from the Bronx. Beautiful, talented, and one of the few working Puerto Rican actresses in Hollywood, Lopez, 25, got her start as a Fly Girl on *In Living Color*. After realizing her future in dance was limited, she decided to concentrate on acting and landed a starring role in this year's Mexican drama *Mi Familia*. In her new film, *Money Train*, she plays a transit cop whose affections are fought over by two foster brothers played by Wesley Snipes and Woody Harelson. Ironically, the last time the two actors paired up (in *White Men Can't Jump*), their supporting actress was fellow Puerto Rican and Fly Girl choreographer Rosie Perez. "No one even mentioned it on the set," insists Lopez. "Maybe it's because Rosie and I are so different." And that distinction is appreciated. "I'd like to open the door for more of us to get quality roles," she says. "After all, Latinos have something unique to offer."

Mimi Valdez



word 'that's blaxploitation'

Like a literary pimp slap from the cocoa-hued hands of Uptown players, Darius James's newest book, *That's Blaxploitation!* (St. Martin's Press), is a wild romp on the black-hand side of '70s culture. The combination of gonzo-style autobiography, film criticism, and bugged interviews with Negro icons of the period (Pam Grier, Iceberg Slim, and Antonio Fargas, among others) makes James's text go down like acid-laced Kool-Aid. And although there is little reference to the genius contributions of James Brown, Curtis Mayfield, or Isaac Hayes to movie soundtracks, *That's Blaxploitation!* still manages to stimulate like a funky vibrator. *Michael A. Gonzales*



LOOk

product perfect presents

'tis the season to be jolly...
and spend lots of loochie, fa la la la la la la la



◀ ADIDAS BOWLING BAG PURSE

Who needs to bowl for dollars when you can just look like you do? \$29.



▲ COMME DES GARÇONS DRY BODY OIL

Spray on this spicy scent for those romantic, cold winter evenings at home. \$65.



▲ THE INNER WORLD OF JIMI HENDRIX

Artist Monika Dannemann, the former fiancée of the late rock icon, tells and paints (literally) a unique picture of Hendrix in this coffee-table book on the 25th anniversary of his death. \$24.95.



▲ POLO SPORT BOOTIES

Keep your toes toasty in these polar fleece foot warmers. \$26.



◀ SONY WATCHMAN

A 10-ounce TV—the size of most remote controls—will keep you tuned in. \$159.



◀ MOTOROLA MICRO DIGITAL ELITE

For that Big Willie, the cellular phone that offers two hours of continuous talk, a voice-mail answering service, and weighs in at less than four ounces. Starting at \$600.



▶ CHANEL VERY VAMP NAIL POLISH

Women of intrigue—like Uma Thurman in *Pulp Fiction* and Mary J. Blige—go for this sexy, seductive hue. \$15.

▼ ISLAND TRADING CO. BOXER SHORTS

Two gills in one: Buy these batik shorts for him and wear them yourself. \$65.



◀ FLUORESCENT SWATCH

Glow in the dark...and be right on time with this sporty wristwatch. \$60.



KONAMI XXL SPORTS SERIES



**3-D TEXTURE
MAPPED POLYGONS**

NO-LOOK PASSES

ALL 29 NBA TEAMS

**REAL-TIME MOTION
CAPTURED ACTION**

REBOUND DUNKS

**SUPERIOR ARTIFICIAL
INTELLIGENCE**

5-ON-5 ACTION



NBA PLAYERS

**MULTIPLE
PERSPECTIVES**

ALLEY-OOP DUNKS

**FULL SEASON AND
PLAYOFF MODES**

PLAYER STATS

**BEHIND THE BACK
DRIBBLING**



www.konami.com

**IF YOU'RE NOT
IN THE
ZONE
YOU'RE
NOT IN THE
GAME**



**"NBA IN THE ZONE"
DECEMBER TIP-OFF**


KONAMI.

©1998 Konami America, Inc. "NBA IN THE ZONE" is a registered trademark of Konami America, Inc. The NBA logo and "NBA IN THE ZONE" are trademarks of the National Basketball Association. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. Konami America, Inc. is not responsible for the content of any website linked to this website. Konami America, Inc. is not responsible for the content of any website linked to this website.

Look



word 'a musical feast' cookbook

What's cookin' with KRS-One, Babyface, Patti LaBelle, Toni Braxton, and Heavy D? It's *A Musical Feast Cookbook* (Global Liaisons). The collection offers up your favorite singers' recipes, and the proceeds are donated to nonprofit homeless organizations. Here's a sample:

Salt-N-Pepa's Jerk Chicken

- 1 whole chicken
- 6-8 medium onions, chopped
- 2 teaspoons pimento berries
- 1 scallion, chopped
- 1 teaspoon celery seeds
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/2 teaspoon oregano
- 1 cup soy sauce
- 1/2 teaspoon thyme
- 1/4 cup oil
- 1/2 teaspoon rosemary
- 3 Scotch bonnet or jalapeño peppers, minced (careful, they're hot!)
- 1/2 teaspoon tarragon

Combine all ingredients, except chicken. Place chicken in large baking dish and cover with marinade. Let sit at least 6 hours (overnight is best).

To cook, preheat oven to 375°F. Remove chicken from marinade and place on broiler pan or cookie sheet. Bake 30 minutes, basting with marinade twice. Remove from oven and place on grill or under broiler 20 to 30 minutes. Salt-N-Pepa to taste! Yield: 4 to 6 servings.

cd-rom burncycle

Picture this: It's the 21st century, and you're a former investigator/data thief named Sol Cutter. You've lost your memory and just realized you have a deadly computer virus downloaded into your brain. You have two hours to find out who you are, why



the virus got there, and most importantly, how to get it out. And the clock is ticking. The secondary objective, of course, is to blast away the enemy before they blast you first.

This is the plot of *Burn:Cycle*, Philips Media's PC/Mac CD-ROM game (which also has its own Web site; find it at <http://www.burncycle.com>).

While the premise is interesting, its complexity makes *Burn:Cycle* extremely hard to follow. Not only do you have just two hours to defuse the bomb, you also have to figure out where to go for clues, how to drive your space cruiser, and how to defeat enemy agents. And yes, it's ultraviolent, with a lot of graphic shots—if you're turned off by blood and guts, this might not be for you.



word 'vivid'

Are you craving wanton encounters and passionate rendezvous but can't seem to find a suitable partner? *Beverly Jenkins*'s latest romance novel, *Vivid*—in which the heaving bosoms and throbbing manhoods belong to people of color—offers an alternative. Set in the late 1800s, it tells the tale of a feisty yet demure, smoldering yet practical female doctor named Vivid who starts a practice in a black settlement in Michigan. As our heroine faces doubting townspeople and becomes involved with Nate, the local mayor, Jenkins weaves relevant black history throughout, which makes the novel an informative and entertaining read. *Joyce E. Davis*

gear wu-wear

As deep-freeze weather sets in, you can protect ya neck with the latest from the Wu-Tang Clan: Wu-Wear!

These rugged but oh-so-fly garments will have dat ass fully equipped for winter. Designed and marketed by Oli "Power" Grant—executive producer of Wu-Tang Management—and his staff, Wu-Wear promises "superior quality at an affordable price." With everything from bubble jackets to watches, hoodies to boots, Wu-Wear caters to everyone's tastes regardless of age (a kids' line is forthcoming), sex, or race.

And while the business of Wu-Wear is bound to boom, the Wu-Tang family keeps it real by giving back to the community: Donations will be made to Hale House—a care center for crack babies—and a scholarship program is in the works.

Wu-Wear is definitely in effect for the nine-six, but if you can't make the trip to Shao Lin, the Wu will soon be coming your way with stores opening in Atlanta, Hartford, Norfolk, and Miami. If you're still out of luck, you can order gear from: Wu-Wear, P.O. Box 10476, Staten Island, N.Y. 10301.

The Blackspot





KONAMI
XXL
SPORTS SERIES

Team



MAKE FULL CONTACT WITH THE PROS.

FLUID 3-D MOTION
CAPTURED ACTION

SUPERIOR ARTIFICIAL
INTELLIGENCE

REAL TIME SGI
RENDERED GRAPHICS

EVERY NFL PLAYER

ALL 30 NFL TEAMS

REALISTIC PURSUITS

OVER 90 SPECIFIC
PLAYER BEHAVIORS

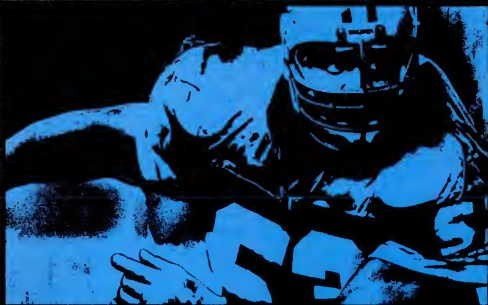
MULTIPLE VIEWING
ANGLES

PLAYER STATS

FLYING HELMETS



www.wtinet.com/wti/konami.htm



"NFL FULL CONTACT"
GAME TIME: NOV. 19



©1998 Konami Games Inc. All rights reserved. Konami and the Konami logo are registered trademarks of Konami Games Inc. in the U.S. and other countries. NFL and the NFL logo are registered trademarks of the National Football League. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners.

TOTAL

GET READY FOR THE TOTAL EXPERIENCE

their highly anticipated self-titled debut album
featuring the brand new hit "no one else" (featuring da brat),
"kissing you" plus their gold hit "can't you see."



"beside every bad boy, there is a bad girl"

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: SEAN "PUFFY" COMBS



ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

© 1995 arista records, inc.

design: drawing board

copywriter: louis roman



R. Kelly
R. Kelly • Jive Records

By Michael Eric Dyson

Nearly a decade ago, a gaggle of new jack singers, influenced by the Gap Band's Charlie Wilson, erotically amplified his smoldering synthesis of pop music and churchy fervor. First, it was Guy's brilliant lead singer, Aaron Hall, who seemed destined to inherit the mantle of Wilson's sophisticated art. And later, it was Public Announcement's guiding spirit, R. Kelly, who appeared to have a claim to Wilson's vocal pedigree. But while Hall's solo career

There's
always
something
good to
discover.

Ornette Coleman & Prime Time Tone Dialing



Ornette Coleman
& Prime Time

now available on

HARMOLODIC



© 1995 Harmolodic, Inc.

has been mired in lackluster performances and mediocre material, Kelly has bumped off naysayers and ground credibility from the stones of doubt cast about his talent.

With 1991's *Born Into the '90s* and 1994's *12 Play*, as well as his work for acts from Changing Faces to Michael Jackson, Kelly proved he could shape memorable pop melodies around liquid grooves and lively harmonies. And within all that, Kelly's songs—pushed along by gritty themes and hip hop chutzpah—retained their street identity. With the multiplatinum *12 Play*, Kelly heightened the stakes of his carnal cravings—mastering the female form became his magnificent obsession, in lyrics *and* in life. Kelly's explicit sexual desires transgressed a dangerous boundary when they allegedly found fulfillment in teen protégée Aaliyah.

The controversy and pain of Kelly's past catch up with him on his third, self-titled album. Like Marvin Gaye (whose secular spirituality bathes this project) before him, Kelly reshapes his personal turmoil to artistic benefit. He opens and closes the album with dramatic testimonies: On "Intro—The Sermon," Kelly vents his frustrations at living under a "magnifying glass." The organ-drenched homily pulsates with his overbubbled call-and-responses. It's as if he trusts only his voice to validate his suffering. But if the spark of testimony is confession, Kelly shows that testimony can be genius when it is defiant. He deliciously enlivens this paradox by admonishing his critics to judge themselves even as he refuses to repent for his own erotic escapades. He *still* don't see nothing wrong with a little bump and grind.

It's fitting, then, when Kelly follows this introduction with "Hump Bounce," a sly reminder that dancing on the floor and dancing in the sheets are separated more by opportunity than intent. The track's churning groove is airbrushed by female harmonies and built on a James Brown riff lifted from (where else?) "The Payback." A

On "Trade In My Life," Kelly takes his sexuality to church, as searing organ chords and the full throttle of gospel hotshot Kirk Franklin's choir sweep him from the pit of desolation.

message in the music, indeed. But it's telling that Kelly refrains from using a sledgehammer where a metaphor might do. Now, unlike on *12 Play*, when he wants to get his mack on, he rediscovers the neglected delights of seduction. On the mellow "You Remind Me of Something," Kelly searches for just the right image of his beloved in an amateurish but auspicious detour from simple sex.

Perhaps it's the way this album revels in a '70s black pop aesthetic that bestows romantic resonance on Kelly's nocturnal ambitions. For instance, on "Down Low (Nobody Has to Know)," Kelly twists and shouts to the Isleys' influence on his art as the legendary brothers themselves lend him their voices and hands. Ron Isley's yearning falsetto glides around Kelly's plaintive tenor—and Ernie Isley's sublimely psychedelic guitar licks—as they tenderly outline their obligation to embrace forbidden love.

"Thank God It's Friday" is sheer fun—a disco groove cobbled together from some rhythmic remains of the S.O.S. Band. A few of the tracks on *R. Kelly*, though, can barely be distinguished from others; nonetheless, Kelly takes an honest swing every time he steps up to the plate, even if he's about the business of borrowing styles in order to possess them on his own terms.

For example, "I Can't Sleep Baby (If I)" could have been written by Babyface. Kelly's vocals quiver with vulnerability as he faces his lover's departure. And on "(You to Be) Be Happy," Kelly burns a light inside the considerable shadow of the raunchy but irresistible Notorious B.I.G. By pinching a hypnotic beat here and a jazzy piano riff there—and by coaxing a PG performance from the MC—Kelly weaves a romantic tapestry from fragments of sounds that surface in the music of Mary J. Blige, B.I.G., and his wife, Faith.

But the heart of Kelly's vision—and songs with titles like "Heaven If You Hear Me" and "Religious Love" bear this out—beats in the love he has found in religious faith. Kelly's is not a sanctified sexiness like that of, say, *q*—though in live performance, Kelly is not above juxtaposing horniness and holiness, Pentecost and panties. But on the album's most powerful cut, "Trade In My Life," Kelly takes his sexuality to church, as searing organ chords and the full throttle of gospel hotshot Kirk Franklin's choir sweep him from the pit of desolation.

Kelly begins with a stunning a cappella prayer that God "look down on the ghetto" to save his children, a sentiment that is sweetly pressured by ethereal background harmonies that cut across Kelly's pleading voice. He ends with a shout of praise as the choir surges, joining him in thanking Jesus for being the head of his life. With this audacious jubilee, as with the entire album, it seems R. Kelly is truly coming into his own—that he is being reborn before our very ears. And so let the church say, *amen*.



al green

YOUR HEART'S IN GOOD HANDS

the legacy continues...



From the debut MCA release-Your Heart's In Good Hands

Produced and arranged by Narada Michael Walden for Perfection Light Productions



algreen.com

Best of



UR40



Volumes One and Two

Includes two new songs
recorded exclusively for Volume Two

featuring the first single and video
Kingston Town

Volume One

FOOD FOR THOUGHT
ONE IN TEN
RED, RED WINE
PLEASE DON'T MAKE ME CRY
IF IT HAPPENS AGAIN
I GOT YOU RARE
DON'T BREAK MY HEART
SING OUR OWN SONG
KAT IN MI KITCHEN
BREAKFAST IN BED

Volume Two

WHERE DID I GO WRONG
HERE I AM
KINGSTON TOWN
THE WAY YOU DO THE
THINGS YOU DO
CAN'T HELP FALLING
IN LOVE
HIGHER GROUND
BRING ME YOUR CUP
REGGAE MUSIC
SUPERSTITION*
UNTIL MY DYING DAY*

*Newly recorded song

The Jackson 5

Soulstation! The 25th Anniversary Collection

Motown

Soulstation!, the new four-CD boxed set celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Jackson 5, is evidence of how one black artist, one black family, and one black-owned record company made the decision to go for it—to express themselves by entertaining the world. The strain you hear when Michael hits high notes to match Sly Stone's in a cover of "Stand!" tells you a challenge has been met. Motown isn't simply measuring itself against Sly & the Family Stone (and thus other efforts of black pop enunciation and innovation); and Michael is plainly striving for a pop crown. It ought to be beyond his prepubescent reach, but like any sincerely expressive act, it reveals something more. At the same time that the Jackson 5 achieve an ideal of success, they confirm—through sound—the ache of sacrifice.

Listening to five young siblings immerse themselves in the ocean of adult passion ("Now I understand what it is to be a man," Jermaine sings on "I Found That Girl") astonishes. Their wish for maturity makes the helplessness and insufficiency of adolescence real. Instead of falsifying black pop emotion by making it cute (love in miniature), the brothers' disciplined adherence to harmony—listen to "La La (Means I Love You)"—offers an acceptable, plausible expression. Nonpareils such as the delightful "Mama's Pearl," tender "Never Can Say Goodbye," and grand "I'll Be There" are absolutely not saccharine. Each is indisputable proof of young mastery, a distinguished sound.

The richness and awe in these recordings came clear in the 1991 translation *Naughty by Nature* made of 1970's "ABC"—cranking up the song's hormonal attack to a new level of craven lust. "O.P.P." distilled everything the J5's apparent sound seemed to deny: the twist of young innocence into commerce, hope into desperation.

The fallout of this spiritual expenditure can be heard on disc two, where Michael's solo act breaks out—they even have him singing Jackson Browne (a joke perhaps?). The sorrowful passion of "Ben" may seem weirdly displaced, but the whole world heard through to its heart, a pop miracle even more stunning than *Thriller*'s success, and more significant. Producers Freddie Perren, Alphonso Mizell, Deke Richards, and Berry Gordy permitted an uncharacteristic vulnerable tone. This awful felicity, with a child's yearning, breaks down the J5's standard hectic cheer. Loneliness sounds like love—that's the way pop goes.

The biggest surprise of *Soulstation!* (especially on disc four's rare and unreleased cuts like "We Can Have Fun") is how good the nonhits are. Check out "The Young Folks": Another Gordy composition, it announces the group's desire as determined as it tells Motown's strategy. Michael sings "You may not like it, but I have to tell you"—it's the same proud confidence that fueled "Bad" ("And the whole world has to answer right now"). This very conscious aspiration must not be forgotten or taken for granted when dancin' to or contemplatin' black pop. *Soulstation!*'s vivacity disguises the drive, ambition, and zeal to make it that underlies the Jackson family story. Sure, it's the original boy-to-man epic, but to confine it to the realm of bubble gum, thus camp, is to intentionally and almost completely misread both the black psyche and American capitalism.

Armond White



Any more power
and it would stand
up to your mom.



The new AIWA MiniMax™ NSX-999. 120 watts/Ch. 3-CD disc changer. Rear surround speakers with DSP and 3-way bass reflex speaker system. Rock the house. For a free AIWA catalog and your nearest AIWA dealer call 1-800-BUY-AIWA Ext. 405.

aiwa
Turn Me On™

Designed in Japan

Kodak
FunSaver
Pocket + **VIBE**
present
it's YOUR LIFE.
SHOOT IT OR LOSE IT.

Shoot It-

Show us your college life:

All Nighters - when you learn a whole semester's worth of work in the next 12 hours.

Homecoming - when you're attacked by outrageous floats and alumni reliving their college days.

House Parties - when you stack up the furniture and get ready for an all night jam.

Study Sessions - where you never crack open a book, but you do get the scoop on that annoying perfect couple that finally broke up.

Send It-

Submit a collage of photos taken with a Kodak Fun Saver Camera (no larger than 8-1/2 x 11), along with your name, address, college and hometown to:

It's Your Life,
Shoot It or Lose It Contest
c/o Vibe Magazine
205 Lexington Avenue
New York, NY 10016

Lose It-

If we don't receive your entry by January 31, 1996.

Win It-

- Three winners will receive:
- a Kodak Fun Saver Cameras Beach Pack, complete with towel, volleyball, and Kodak Fun Saver Pocket Camera
- a Vibe t-shirt
- photo collages published in the May issue of Vibe Magazine and posted on Vibe Online (visit us at www.vibe.com)



No purchase necessary. We do not assume responsibility for lost, stolen, misplaced, misdirected, or late mail entries. All photos must be taken with a Kodak Fun Saver Camera and all parts must be made on Kodak paper. Contestants must know the names of all individuals pictured in their photographs. All winners become the property of Vibe. Entries must be postmarked by January 31st, 1996. Winners will be selected on or about February 1st on the basis of originality, subject matter, appeal, and technical merit. Decisions of the judges will be final. Contest open to all U.S. residents. We do not seek employee and family of Vibe, Eastern Kiosk Company and their affiliates, subsidiaries, and advertising agencies. To close a winners list, please send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to the above address. All federal, state, and local laws apply. Any taxes are the sole responsibility of the winners. Void where prohibited. This is not a Kiosk advertisement. All contest responsibilities are assumed by Vibe.

PHOTO BY JAMES LEE



Ben Harper

Fight for Your Mind
Virgins

Seems like black "alternative" sound machines are popping up proper-like: Me'Shell NdegéOcelot gets hers, Dionne Farris flexes, Spearhead's stuff makes noise, and for the more conventional hip hop palate, there's the Fugees and the Roots. Another upstart is the compelling Ben Harper—a 26-year-old, Los Angeles-bred folk-bluesmith. He sings rich songs of poverty with precision. And he rocks his slide guitar like he's been here before.

On *Fight for Your Mind*, Harper takes down the highway of social injustice, aiming to cast out the world's problems while ushering in sensitivity and understanding. He explored similar territory on his well-received 1994 debut, *Welcome to the Cruel World*. Joins from that album, like "Mama's Got a Girlfriend Now" and "How Many Miles Must We March," merged the rage of the '60s with the frustrations of the '90s. A hybrid blessed by tradition, Harper's sound has nothing to do with retroactivity. And *Fight* is even better than *Cruel*.

"Oppression," the opening track, demonstrates the beautiful solemnity of Harper's voice. "To divide and to conquer is your goal," sings Harper. "But oppression / I won't let you near me / Oppression / You shall learn to fear me." He chants this with brutal, no-joke conviction as his six-stringed companion seems to hum in the distance. "Another Lonely Day" is intimate yet wide-open, and "Burn One Down" sports Harper in a James-Taylor-meets-Bob-Marley moment. And then there's the incredible "God Fearing Man." It's wet with elements of Hendrix's futuristic epic, "1983... (A Mermaid I Should Turn to Be)." On this one, Harper's got to be employing either the psychedelic energies of LSD or the psychic energies of a powerful shaman.

In the end, though, Ben Harper is far from "alternative." Alternative to what, anyway? Harper, like the best artists, bares the truths that stalk us in the bathroom mirror come morning time. Wake up. *Sasha Jenkins*

Lordz of Brooklyn
All in the Family
American Recordings



Representin' Bay Ridge, with a shout-out to Bensonhurst—the last place you'd expect to find on the hip hop map—the 12 tracks on the Lordz of Brooklyn's debut are made up of tight beats, Onyx-like psycho-yelling, guitar blasts, and classic rock loops. "Saturday Nite Fever," the first single, reworks and redefines the Guess Who's "American Woman" to brilliant effect.

But let's face it, these guys are the Italian House of Pain. *All in the Family* is filled with talk about Cheyvs, the mob, Mom's spaghetti sauce, and Louisville Stingers. But busting people's heads with baseball bats is a subject that's a bit hard to digest from kids whose "American Made" expresses a scary, blind patriotism. The crew's thick bass lines don't smooth over everything. *Eric Berman*

Finals WEEK.

(IF ONLY MOM
COULD SEE
HER BABY
NOW.)

THE

KODAK FUNSAVER POCKET.

THE ONE-TIME-USE,

(USE IT ONCE. GET IT?)

HASSLE-FREE, GO ANYWHERE,

SHOOT ANY-
THING
CAMERA.

it's YOUR LIFE.
SHOOT IT OR LOSE IT.



Don't waste your time on wack rappers...

KRS ONE

the album
In stores now!

Available at:



© 1992 JIVE RECORDS, INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

THE REAL MUSIC

By Greg Tate

Blue Note has been diggin' in the crates to reissue a bunch of long-out-of-print gems. Two recent rediscoveries come from the well-known sax man **ORNETTE COLEMAN** and the not-so-well-known drummer **PETE LA ROCA**. La Roca's résumé before his 1965 date, *Basra*, included stints with John Coltrane, Sonny Rollins, and Art Farmer. Not long afterward he left performing to take up the practice of law. His ensemble for this session: tenor legend Joe Henderson, bassist Steve Swallow (whom you may know from his longtime association with Carla Bley), and pianist Steve Kuhn (who had the unfortunate distinction of losing his job in Coltrane's quartet to McCoy Tyner).

Three of the six compositions here—"Candu," "Tears Come From Heaven," and "Basra"—are La Roca's; Swallow's "Eiderdown" and two standards, "Lazy Afternoon" and "Malagueña," round out the mix. What's distinctive about La Roca's drum sound is his restraint with cymbals and his very expressive use of the snare drum—it harkens back to his days as a snare drummer in his junior high school marching band, as well as the time he spent on the Latin music scene.

As a songwriter, La Roca concentrates more on creating provocative moods than arresting melodies. This leaves plenty of breathing and blowing room for his bandmates, who tend to use the openness to intensify the intimate quality of their group interaction. Joe Henderson brings to La Roca's session the raw funk, romanticism, and intellect that have always distinguished his tenor playing; he turns in a particularly heart-wrenching reading of "Lazy Afternoon." Kuhn has a wonderfully understated approach to the keyboard and wrests deep feelings from "Afternoon" with some seemingly simple note choices. Bassist Swallow's tune is the most conventionally swinging track, and everybody rocks it with a cerebral fire.

In the 1950s, Ornette Coleman changed the notion of what was possible in jazz. He did this by dispensing with chord changes, freeing up the bass and drums to contribute more to the compositional configuration of the music—and by allowing us access to his own incredibly individual alto sound. In 1966, Coleman further shocked the world by making *The Empty Foxhole* (Blue Note), an album featuring bassist Charlie Haden and Coleman's eight-year-old son, Denardo, on drums. The leader himself, to the horror of many, also appeared on trumpet and violin.

What young Denardo lacked in muscle control he made up for in combustible spontaneity and a spacious approach to accompaniment. Ornette's trumpet playing has always left me a mite chill, but re his violin work, you've never heard a bow wreck up the strings for the sheer string-mangling joy of it.

Last, check out guitarists **DAVE TRONZO** and **REEVES GABRELS'** tasteful duet album, *Night in Anniesia*, wherein they free-form, float, funkily, and mash up pretty floral arrangements in the name of having mad fun. Both of these cats can play *anything they want*. What they choose to play is a glorious mess, and I recommend this album to any guitarist looking to find out just how much he/she can get away with and still be considered a serious musician.

Pete La Roca



PHOTO COURTESY OF BLUE NOTE RECORDS



Oleta Adams Mercury

Moving On

Since her sublime 1991 debut, *Circle of One*, with the anthemic hit "Get Here," Oleta Adams has stalled commercially. Her second album, 1994's *Evolution*, was well-received by critics but sold little. And so with what seems an eye toward increasing her sales potential, Adams, herself a gifted writer, teams with proven hitmakers Michael Powell and Vassel Benford (Jade, Mariah Carey) for *Moving On*—and the results are decidedly mixed.

The first single, "Never Knew Love," is a pleasant enough song, but it hardly takes advantage of Adams's powerful voice or her ability to translate lyrics and music into pure emotion. Elsewhere, she is practically drowned in pedestrian arrangements, and her backup singers seem to be singing the same parts on each song. The theme of *Moving On* is love ad nauseam—has anyone counted the times the word love appears on an average R&B album these days? Even the universal message-of-love-type songs, like "Love Begins at Home," are tired and fall woefully flat.

There are moments, though, where Adams sounds her best. "Long Distance Love" shines—here she seems to be feeling something intense and so, then, does the listener. "Life Keeps Moving On" is nice too, even though it sounds like a theme song in search of a movie. But mostly, *Moving On* is a disappointment. Oleta Adams, a gifted soul survivor, deserves better production, better songs, better everything.

Tonya Pendleton



8-Off

Wrap Your Lips
Around This

EastWest

8-Off has his own special way of doing things. His often ominous tracks, with their shouted choruses and grimy delivery, immediately evoke the mettle of Onyx (his former associates). But the Brooklyn-born Assassin isn't above incorporating smooth R&B vocalists like Horace Brown into his music, and he writes catchy jingles along the lines of "Ghetto Girl"—the best L.L. Cool J song Uncle L. never recorded.

Of course, schizophrenia lite will only take you so far. 8-Off's just-okay *Wrap Your Lips Around This* is an uneasy listen for heads with itchy fast-forward trigger fingers.

Chairman Mao



AZ



DOE OR DIE

the debut album featuring
**SUGAR HILL
 RATHER UNIQUE &
 MO' MONEY MO' MURDER**
 (featuring NAS)

IN-STORES NOW

EMI Records



Management: Damian Blaydes for AllOut Management



PHOTO BY JAMES MASON



Left to right: Darnell Van Renssaler, Garfield Bright, Carl Martin, Marc Gay

Shai **Blackface**

Gasoline Alley/MCA

Shai's lush four-part harmonies are what give their self-produced *Blackface* the energy of a crisp new day. The interaction of the quartet's voices is the backbone of Shai's hip-hop-meets-Earth-Wind-&-Fire-styled soul. Evoking the beautiful space where pop and R&B meet, the first half of *Blackface* (the follow-up to their 1991 *If Ever I Fall in Love*) includes hopelessly romantic ballads like the nearly a cappella "During the Storm." And while the bass-driven funk of songs like "Will I Find Someone" rocks *Blackface*'s second half, the (completely) a cappella closing number, "If I Gave (A Confession of Hope)," brings this excellent album full circle.

Omoranke Idowu

PHOTO BY JAMES MASON



Will Downing

Moods

Mercury

On his fifth album, *Moods*, Will Downing uses his caramel baritone to soar into falsetto, tickle syllables, and squeeze years of hurt from one word. He elegantly interprets contemporary standards like Natalie Cole's "Inseparable" and Bonnie Raitt's "I Can't Make You Love Me." "Don't Wait for Love" has a breezy bossa nova feel, punctuated by a tangy Jonathan Butler guitar solo. Downing coproduced every cut here, but regrettably, the "hip" mid-tempo grooves like "Just to Be With You" and "Fall in Love Again" sound stale. They're just not the *Moods* that demonstrate how Downing swings. It's when he's slow and jazzy that he swings most beautifully.

David Mills

BOOM SHOTS

By Rob Kenner

The sun sets, the tide rolls out, and another crop of flash-in-the-pan dons replaces the last. That's the way it usually goes in the dancehall biz, where young artists get milked dry and underdeveloped careers often fade away fast. But LT. STITCHIE's return to the pinnacle of popularity is a shining exception to the rule.



PHOTO COURTESY OF JAY'S MUSIC

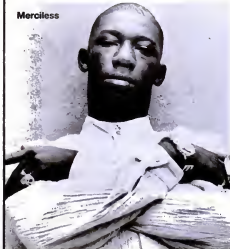
A comic storyteller par excellence, Stitchie dominated Jamaica in the late '80s with light-hearted tunes like "Wear Yu Size," a message to ladies who underestimate their shoe size, and the satirical "Natty Dread," which angered some Rastafarians but spent 14 weeks atop the Jamaican charts. The former schoolteacher's talent for creating a multitude of voices and characters within his rapid-fire lyrical compositions kept audiences in stitches, but he actually owes his name to a printer's mistake on the label of his first release (he was supposed to be Stitche—because of his love for citrus fruits).

Stitchie signed a multialbum contract with Atlantic Records in 1988, becoming the first dancehall artist to land a major-label deal. His seven years with Atlantic were not uneventful—three albums, collaborations with En Vogue and L.L. Cool J., even an occasional ripple on the *Billboard* charts—but back home, musical fashions were flowing in other directions. Then in the mid-1990s, Stitchie resumed voicing singles for top Yard labels like Jammy's and Shocking Vibes. Upon his 1994 release from Atlantic, he came back harder than ever, busting out a series of Jamaican No. 1 singles including the blistering "Bun It Down," the playfully vengeful "Hello Carol," and a war cry titled "Hot Like the Sun."

These are collected on a sizzling disc called *Bangarang* (Shanachie), along with a pair of outstanding duets with Marcia Griffiths and Richie Stephens. But Stitchie is at his best as a soloist, as in the comic masterpiece "Fresh Sexy Chicken," featured on his other recent album, *Gangsta* (V.P.). "You have to be clear about what you are talking," says the master of subtle wordplay. "And have empirical evidence to substantiate it." Once a teacher, always a teacher.

"Mi lend out me mercy / Mi nah get it back yet." Such was the world's introduction to one of 1994's wickedest new DJs, **MERCILESS**. The dapper, big-voiced 24-year-old with a surprisingly ire disposition has blazed a trail of remarkable releases in a short time—especially "Greedy fi More" (Star Trail) and "God Alone" (Annex), a solid-gold collaboration with Little Hero and Action Fire. His biggest hit, "Mavis" (Big Yard), reworks Shaggy's "Boombastic" rhythm with an urgent message against domestic violence. "Some man no treat them woman the way they should," he explains. "That's why I wrote the song."

Merciless



"Gal a fly all the way from Paris," goes the chorus, "and a tell me how she 'fraid a Chuck Norris / She nah want nah man to thump and box and kick / Mavis want a man that is romantic." One day not long ago, as the song played on a Kingston radio station, a female DJ briefly turned it down to remark, "Hear that now, men. Be careful how you best your woman." Talk about a public service announcement.

PHOTO BY JOHNNY BLAKE



The self-titled new album
featuring

Hooked
On You
and Now
That I've
Lost You



Comfi' on
strong...

silk is back to show you how they do it: spinning the smooth harmonies and sensuality proves that made their debut album *Lose Control* a double platinum smash.

Produced by the Most of the Best and Walter Stewart

On EMI-Kelco compact discs and cassette,
<http://www.emikelco.com>

© 1995 EMI-Kelco Entertainment Group, a division of Warner Communications Inc. All Rights Reserved.

Executed by **ICE CUBE**

A NEW SET
PUTTIN'
DOWN BOMB ASS
RECORDS...



The Debut Album

"SOUTH CENTRAL LOS SKANLESS"

on sale now at your
favorite record
store on

featuring

"what you wanna do?"

"bounce, rock, skate"

"what that south central like" (with B-Real)

"land of the skanless"

"o.g.'s trippin'" (with Mack-10)

"steal at will"

For merchandise information please write to:
South Side Productions, 1801 Western Blvd.,
#200, Northridge, CA 91324



© 1993 South Side Records, Inc.
All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced without permission.



PHOTO BY SHAWN CLARK



Mic Geronimo

Blunt Recordings

The Natural

You can hear an amalgamation of some of Queens' most vital hip hop operators in Mic Geronimo's raspy vocal cords: an ill-matic cadence worthy of Nas, a touch of sleepy abstraction à la Q-Tip, and biting realism on par with Mobb Deep. It's all condensed into one appealing entity. Anyone seduced by the poetics of "Shit's Real" and "Masta I.C.," the two singles—Geronimo released in 1994 and 1995, needs little convincing. Here, it seems, is a natural for sure.

But while Mic Geronimo possesses the talent to fraternize with the best in the game, *The Natural* merely chugs along solidly. Granted, there are head-nodding beats aplenty, as top-notch New York producers (including Buckwild, Mark Spark, and Da Beatminerz' Mr. Walt) cushion Geronimo's voice with perpetually popping percussion. "Wherever You Are," "Men vs. Many" (featuring the stalwart O.C. and newcomer Royal Flush), and the title cut's declaration of arrival all bump with indisputably dope vigor and provide rock-steady support for some of Geronimo's more fluid lyrical forays: "Leave the unprofessional prose alone," he says on the title track. "Enjoy the sound that's now emittin' out the microphone / I'm every word personified / Create astonishing lines / Go inside and pull a paragraph or two from my mind."

However, as so-called underground artists from Mobb Deep to Wu-Tang Clan will realize, dope beats may get you over, but memorable songs are what separate the best from the rest. And as memorable songs go, "Shit's Real" and "Masta I.C." are still the best of this lot. The remainder of the LP amounts to a collection of solid album cuts. Cult figure status notwithstanding, only when Mic Geronimo's compositional powers live up to his vocal abilities will his achievements truly stand with the best the Q-Borough has to offer. *Chairman Mao*



'Dead Presidents'

Soundtrack to the
Motion Picture

Various Artists
Capitol

The Hughes brothers have chosen a haunting sonic backdrop for their second film, *Dead Presidents*, the tale of a Vietnam vet trying to rejoin society. You can almost hear the struggle for redemption playing out through these soul classics. Curtis Mayfield's incendiary "If There's Hell Below," the wild funk of James Brown's "The Payback" (also soldier slang for revenge killing), the transcendence of the Spinners' "I'll Be Around"—the collection is part Motown, part Stax; part light and part darkness. These may simply be the songs that Albert and Allen Hughes heard growing up in 1970s Detroit, but grouped here, they have all the passion of a biblical drama. *Chris Norris*



D'Angelo's

Top 10

SIGN: Aquarius

ROOTS: Richmond, Va.

CURRENT PLAYLIST:

1. PRINCE—
"Ballad of Dorothy Parker"

2. MILES DAVIS—
"Freddy Freeloader"

3. OHIO PLAYERS—
"Sweet Sticky Thing"

4. MARVIN GAYE—
"Trouble Man"

5. PRINCE—
"Sign 'O' the Times"

6. STEVIE WONDER—
"Innervisions"

7. ERIC B. & RAKIM—
"Paid in Full"

8. THE METERS—
"The Meters"

9. SLY & THE FAMILY STONE—
"Small Talk"

10. HERBIE HANCOCK—
"Head Hunters"

**ALBUM HE PLAYS WHEN IT'S
TIME TO GET BUSY:**

SADE—
"Love Deluxe"

**SONG THAT USED TO BE HIS
MOM AND DAD'S JAM:**
MARVIN GAYE—
"Let's Get It On"

**SONG THAT USED TO ROCK HIS
HIGH SCHOOL DANCES:**
ERIC B. & RAKIM—
"Eric B. for President"

FIRST LIVE SHOW HE ATTENDED:
Cameo, Richmond, Va.

Now Playing
Office favorites—
in no particular order

JANET JACKSON—
"When I Think of You"
Gimme a beat!

SUGA—
"What's Up Star?"
Gum-snapping sass.

THE CRANBERRIES—
"Zombie"
Ultimate alternative music.

VARIOUS ARTISTS—
Clockers soundtrack
Yes. Chaka rules.

SOCIETY OF SOUL—
"Pushin'"
Some other shit.

DAVID BOWIE—
"Outside"
Briny, menacing rock.

CYPRESS HILL—
"When the Shit Goes Down"
It's a crack-up.

PRINCE MARKIE DEE FEATURING JOE—
"All My Love All the Time"
Phat-ass track.

PRINCE—
"Baby I'm a Star"
Self-help sing-along.

BEENIE MAN—
"Blessed"
Rude bwoy, truly.



Prince Markie Dee

VIBERaters

PHOTO BY TAE

Simply Red

life

The new album
featuring
"Fairground"

Produced by Mick Hucknall
and Stewart Levine

Four artists top-claim the worldwide superstar status of Simply Red. Over the course of four albums, the band has sold 25 million records and charted dozens of hit singles, including the #1 smashies "Holding Back the Years" and "If You Don't Know Me By Now."

Life brings with the effortless, exuberant soul that always makes a new Simply Red album an eagerly awaited event around the globe.

On Eastwest Records
America compact discs
and cassette.
<http://www.elektra.com>



Diana Ross

Take Me Higher

Motown

Diana Ross's singing has always been a triumph of style over substance. In a sense, her strength is founded on technical weakness. The limited size and range of her voice necessitate a soft touch—she simply *can't* oversell a song. With her exquisitely light tone and gently sensuous phrasing, Ross gives credence to the theory that in pop music, less is often more.

How sad, then, that her new album, *Take Me Higher*, is mired in excess. There are too many collaborators, too much synthetic production and heavy-handed sentiment. Ross has always done her best work within well-defined, tightly structured concepts, from the Supremes to her disco dalliance with Nile Rodgers 15 years ago. On *Higher*, though, the only palpable vision is a firm eye on the middle of the road.

The first half of the album could be a primer on how to make decently structured contemporary soul tunes sound as antiseptic as possible. The title track, a dance pop ditty produced and cowritten by Narada Michael Walden, is fueled by numbing synth riffs. Similarly, "If You're Not Gonna Love Me Right" offers slick electro-funk in lieu of the brio its title would suggest. Ross's vocals sound less vital, too; even on a delicate ballad like "Let Somebody Know," she seems almost stupefied by the lavish tedium of the arrangements.

On later tracks like "Only Love Can Conquer All" and "I Never Loved a Man Before," Ross reveals some of her delicate vibrancy—perhaps encouraged by the relatively organic-sounding orchestration, with its flourishes of piano and electric guitar. Still, she has little but bombastic clichés to work with.

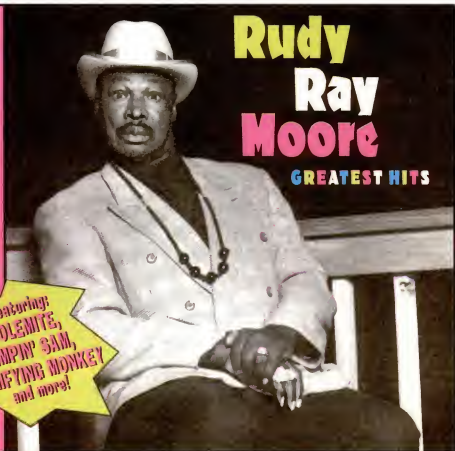
Take Me Higher concludes with a cover of "I Will Survive." As one of our most enduring icons, Ross could have delivered the song with an edge of knowing conviction. Instead, she sounds complacent, almost bored. If Ross wants to survive as a relevant artist, she'll have to summon forth more passion—and style—than that. *Elysa Gardner*

**OFFENSIVE
TO
WHOM?**

NOW AVAILABLE ON
CD AND CASSETTE AT
YOUR LOCAL MUSIC STORE!



© 1995 The Right Stuff, A division of Capital Records, Inc.



**Rudy
Ray
Moore**

GREATEST HITS

Featuring:
**DOLEMITE,
PIMPIN' SAM,
SIGNIFYING MONKEY**
and more!

PHOTO BY BOLOO
Left to right: Bootie Brown, Slimkid Tre, Fatlip, Imani



Pharcyde

Labcabinacalifornia

Delicious Vinyl

When the Pharcyde dropped 1992's *Bizarre Ride II the Pharcyde*, it was obvious these hip hop cats had spent many evenings with the stereo and a stack of Native Tongue (De La Soul, A Tribe Called Quest, the Jungle Brothers) discs and a pile of vintage soul 45s—and formulated the inclination to lift Left Coast style to the next level. With two trippy singles, "Ya Mama" and the supreme "Passin' Me By," they took the West out of drive-by wildness and into blunted psychedelic style. The Pharcyde's debut was critically acclaimed, real folks seemed to dig it, but the boys in the band—Bootie Brown, Slimkid Tre, Fatlip, and Imani—just never struck the avant-garde section of my brain the way I had hoped.

But hold up, wait a minute—currently crashing through the basement door of their Labcabinacalifornia (the name of their studio out West) is *Labcabinacalifornia*. The Pharcyde have returned with a booming sophomore disc reminiscent of early-career Sly & the Family Stone, mid Stevie Wonder, and late Sun Ra. Unafraid of swimming in lyrical streams of consciousness or sailing on the seas of the '70s, the Pharcyde have created the score to a yet-to-be-made blaxploitation dream flick. "Drop" has a bugged-out Beastie Boys vocal sample, and "Y?" features soulful background singers. Just don't ask me what the crew is sayin' yet, because this is one of those discs that takes long, long listens to really hear.

I could, however, do without the stupid skit "Little D," which lowers the group to the level of child abusers. But tunes like the extra-slinky "Runnin'" and most of the remaining tracks are extremely fly—they stomp right on through in big tie-dyed boots. *Michael A. Gonzales*



WC & Curb Servin' the Maad Circle

Playdog/London

The strife between the East and West is tired, but with *Curb Servin'*, WC & the Maad Circle show fools exactly how the Left Coast rocks. Even though we've heard it all before—gangsta rhymes over funk beats—WC, on his second album, manages to incorporate some originality into his lyrics. The comical "Put On the Set" finds WC on a drug-induced journey through his television. The he gets off on the idea of a revolutionary ghetto uprising in "Wet Dream," wherein "niggas in the 'hood was finally gettin' together." Of course, there are the typical boastful, gangbanging cuts, but appearances from Ice Cube (who also produces a couple of tracks) and Coolio (who was a member of the group back in '92) make them somewhat bearable. This crew might have even the most hardcore easterners throwin' up their W's. *Shani Saxon*

HIC GERONIMO

Behold the
uncontrollable,
I keep the
whole world
in drama...



the
NATURAL
featuring "The Natural,"
"wherever you Are" and
"MASTA I.C."

debut album on

BLUNT
RECORDINGS

blunt recordings, 23 east 4th street, new york, ny 10003
tel 212.970.6410 fax 212.970.6480
web http://www.bluntrecords.com

ACID JAZZ

the collection...a musical dose featuring



THE BRAND NEW HEAVIES

Original Flava
Rare old-timers, oldies and
unreleased tracks from the
founding Heavies



CORDUROY

Out Of Here
Effortlessly cool retro pop
with a swinging 60's edge



VIBRAPHONIC

Z
Sweet grooves layered in soul

Find out more about the
Acid Jazz Collection at
<http://www.bluemusicdirect.com>
or acidjazz.biz
Hollywood Records
500 S. Buena Vista St.
Burbank, CA 91521

ACID JAZZ

Bluemusicdirect.com
www.bluemusicdirect.com



MOTHER EARTH

The People Tree
The best of 70's rock & soul
on a 90's tip

NOTES FROM THE UNDERGROUND

By Mimi Voldes

The New York area that started this thing called hip hop has been fairly quiet lately. Only a few MCs have been representing the Bronx recently—maybe they're all quietly working on some "next shit" with Bambaataa. For now, though, the **Sium Brothers** are trying to do their thing. The Bronx-bred rapper Reggie Reg and his hype men, J.B. and Kool Joe, have been pressing up material on their own Suicide Records (201-761-7000). The boastful "Sure Shot" features a jazzy, funkified beat spiced up with sarcastic one-liners: "You can flex / I don't sweat your fake threats / I'm not a tough guy, but neither was Bernhard Goetz." Reggie Reg's voice is distinct—deep and funky.

Besides being the voice of Gang Starr, Guru (who just released *Jazzmatazz Vol. II: The New Reality*) also has his own label, Ill Kid Records (212-343-2200). Ill Kid's first single includes two dope groups. On the "Bronx Side," there's **Operation Ratification**—they freak flows over the pulsating bass line from "Rotten Apple." Their rhymes are kinda on the political tip and offer a panoramic view of the drama they see in the ghetto. The catchy hook, "5-0 is hawking me / Somebody's talking G," is what really pulls you into the song's vibe. The "Queens Side" features **Stikken Moov's** "Attack," and with its hypnotic rhythm and clever samples—M.O.P. and Method Man on the chorus—it's becoming a favorite on underground mix shows in New York. The songs will be part of Payday's *Ill Kid Classics* compilation album, due in November. Also stepping up will be Bahamadia, Group Home, and Jeru the Damaja.

As East Coast MCs get to work, transplanted lyricists on the West Coast are just as busy. **Massive**, a trio based in Tacoma, Wash., could easily blow up if given the chance. Rock Mass (originally from New Jersey), Da Infamous Killer Shane (Harlem), and China Man (North Carolina) have been trying to get a deal for about four years. Their demo, which includes the smooth, melodic "Don't Let Nothing Move but the Money," has been circulating around New York recently. It's one of those tracks you want to hear over and over again. For info, call 206-472-7520.

Hailing from Los Angeles, **Mannish** hit hard with "Expect That (Bird Mix)" from Correct Records/Grindstone Entertainment (310-246-0779). Obviously influenced by Ultramagnetic MC's, the duo throw lyrics back and forth over beats that have a virtual-reality flavor to 'em. "A lot of bros out there is copycats with them sloppy raps / Perpetrating something special in their best show" is a rap that illustrates the crew's feelings about those who aren't original. There are a lot of creative new artists hailing from Cali—the Luniz and Ras Kass among them—but Mannish add another unique style to the fluorescent spectrum coming from out West.

Stikken Moov (left to right): Gus da Vigilante,
T-Bone da Menace, Dog "God flipped"



PHOTO BY GARY FARMER

Fazy II

eternal II

ALL HIS GREATEST HITS

PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION
© 1998 PRINCE RECORDS, INC.

WARNER

20 Questions

1. Can we all please stop pretending that we still like *Martin*? 2. Why will the forthcoming Aaliyah album (due summer 1996) have songs from *Jermaine Dupri*, *Naughty by Nature's Kay Gee*, DJ *Pooh*, and *Sean "Puffy" Combs*, but absolutely none from *R. Kelly*? 3. (Is it 'cause age is much, much more than a number?)



Aaliyah

4. Doesn't the video for *Janet Jackson's* "Runaway" remind you way too much of her brother *Michael's* 1992 "Black or White"? 5. Why won't *En Vogue* just announce their breakup and get it over with? 6. Could the *Erick Sermon/Too Short* duet and the forthcoming *Dangerous Crew* compilation be the biggest East-meets-West moment since *Ice Cube* recorded *Amerikkka's Most Wanted* with

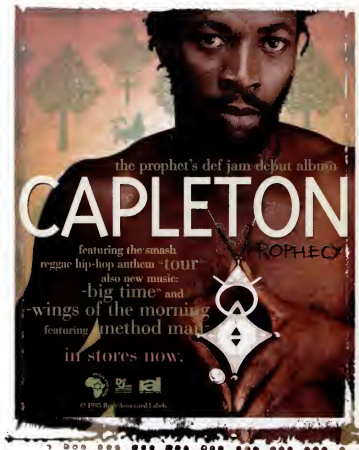
Public Enemy? 7. Or is it the *Wu-Tang Clan/Cypress Hill* collaboration, "Killa Hill" on the Hill's new *III*? 8. We want to hear the whole song or no song—so can we please, on awards shows, be through with *medleys*? 9. Maybe he knows it's funny—but if he doesn't, why is *Lenny Kravitz* singing something called "Rock and Roll Is Dead" over a riff completely bitten from *Led Zeppelin's* "Heartbreaker"? 10. Why are we warming up to *Millibone*? 11. Is it because she's so very crystal clear about things that we're getting deeper and deeper into *bell hooks's Killing Rage: Ending Racism*? 12. Are *Salt-N-Pepa* showing *TLC* what a *real* strip poker game is in the video for *Tupac's* "Temptations," or what? 13. And while we're on *TLC*, exactly how long does *Lisa Lopes* plan on wearing that smudge under her eye? 14. What's with *Ice Cube* and model/actress *Elizabeth Hurley* (*Hugh Grant's* woman) filming a movie together in Africa? (Guess he put that "cave bitch" stuff to the side....) 15. Why do we feel like starting a support group for the actors and actresses who have to play the lone black professionals on *90210*, *Central Park West*, and *ER*? 16. Is it because the first one made *absolutely* no sense that there are two different videos for *Faith Evans's* "You Used to Love Me"? (Of course, the second one makes no sense either.) 17. Isn't "Could

This Be the Love," the cut *DeVante* produced on *Al Green's* new album, the absolute jam? 18. Why is *Veronica* being sold to us as a baby *Vanessa Williams* instead of a fierce Puerto Rican songstress? 19. Why do we have the sneaking suspicion that the new *Ace Ventura* movie isn't going to be funny *ba ba*, but funny *peculiar*? 20. And hey! Can we get a hallelujah on the new *Kirk Franklin* Christmas album? Yes!



Cube

COURTESY OF ALAN YOUNG GEMINI



the prophet's def jam debut album
CAPLETON
featuring the smash
reggae hip-hop anthem "LOUF"
also new music:
"big time" and
"wings of the morning"
featuring *method man*
in stores now.

© 1995 Bob's Records Ltd. dsh

THE ULTIMATE GREATEST REMIXES

ROB-ROB'S BORIQUA ANTHEM
GONNA MAKE YOU SWEAT (Everybody Dance Now)
Two Slammin' Vocal Club Mix
HERE WE GO LET'S ROCK & ROLL
The Ultimate remixes in 12 mix
THINGS THAT MAKE YOU GO HUMMMM
The Ultimate Club House Mix
JUST A TOUCH OF LOVE
The C+C Garage Mix
A DEEPER LOVE
A Deeper Love Mix
KEEP IT COMIN' (Dance Till You Can't Dance No More)
C+C Club Mix
DO YOU WANNA GET FUNKY
Vocal Club Mix
TAKE A TOKE
Rob-Rob's Deep Mix
I FOUND LOVE
C+C Underground Club Mix

C+C Music Factory
ULTIMATE

The ultimate collection for
the ultimate C+C fan.

Produced by Robert Combs & David Cole for C+C/Citibank Music Enterprises
Rob-Rob's Boriqua Anthem Co-Produced by Bob Rosa & Duran Ramos.
http://www.ccmusic.com

CCM1995A

© 1995 C+C Music Factory, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

AVAILABLE AT ALL
musicland / **Sam Goody**
LOCATIONS
AND ALL LICENSED RETAILERS.

LIQUID GOLD



Kemi Oyl and Kemi Plus, "The ORIGINAL" all natural conditioning oil, is liquid gold for your hair. Light and touchable for today's styling. Penetrating to give your hair the nutrients it needs to restore sheen, body and strength. Use to prevent dryness, split ends and damage from blow dryers and curling irons. Also works great for hot oil treatments. "Kemi Oyl the real thing!!!"


**DICTATED BY NATURE...
 DESIGNED BY SCIENCE**
 Consult Your Professional Hair Stylist
 An African-American Company
 (1-800-554-KEMI)

CALL FOR YOUR FREE BROCHURE
ON HERBAL HAIR CARE PRODUCTS



SINGLE FILE

By James Hunter

Without producer Teddy Riley, the wide-screen backbeat of R&B and hip-hop wouldn't exist. He invented new jack swing, and then, along with the brothers Damion and Aaron Hall, formed GUY. The trio released a bunch of ultrasophisticated hits, then disbanded—but now they're back with "Tell Me What You Like" (Uptown/MCA). It re-creates Guy's passionate yet mathematical thing. At the beginning,

Salt-N-Pepa



Aaron jumps into the thick of things with his stellar tone. That's followed by a taut sonic explosion that quickly ends, then backs up to explain itself groove-fully over four absorbing minutes. ...On **LITTLE SHAWN's** "Dom Perignon" (Uptown/MCA), everything's held together by a lazy saxophone riffing over a loose beat and those old-guy gangsta vocals Snoop Doggy Dogg and Adina Howard love. L.V.'s "Wrong Come Up"/"Gangsta's Boogie" (Tommy Boy) is packed with synth-brass, electric guitar, a bass groove, and a catchy chorus. On **THE CLICK's** "Scandalous"/"Hurricane" (Jive), we find a Clintonesque placement of roomfuls of people talkin' and testifyin' to slow funk. So amid all this confusion, it's cool to hear the lucid voice of **RAY LUV** inviting folks to "Ride Wit the Luvva Man" (Young Black Brotha/Atlantic). Although not quite the Sinatra of the MC field—for that, check **RAKIM's** "Shades of Black" (Chase Remix) (Avatar/Polygram) from the *Pump Ya Fist* collection—the Bay Area's Luv is real. ...Rookie **VERONICA's** "Without Love" (Mercury) uses the Guy technique of trance-inducing rhythms but is missing the X-factor that keeps repetition from coming off like, uh, repetition. She may never try anything as melodic as **JANET JACKSON's** sweet "Runaway" (A&M), but Veronica will have to find some hookiness one way or another. Just ask the typically resourceful **SALT-N-PEPA**, whose "Ain't Nuthin' But a She Thing" (London) is full of identity, message, fun, and eyeliner. ...**DIAMOND** featuring **D-ROC's** "Bankhead Bounce" (EastWest) clocks in as the 2 millionth attempt to duplicate the success of "Whoot [and/or Whoomp!], There It Is." Is there a prize for this?...**DR. ALBAN's** "Look Who's Talking" (Logic) is super-efficient disco glued down with dancehall toasting, answered by streaming female vocals—it's not as gnarly as **BLAHIZAY, BLAHZAY's** "Danger" (Mercury), a stripped-down piece of islandic magnetism with "Oh my God" as its chorus. And it's nowhere near as creative as **THE BUCKETHEADS'** "The Bomb (These Sounds Fall Into My Mind)" (Henny Street/Big Beat/Atlantic), available in eight remixes seemingly dedicated to the idea of hate house—with all of the expected collage, speed, soul, and nonstop kicks. ...Remixer Todd Terry's handling of **EVERYTHING BUT THE GIRL's** "Missing" (Atlantic) allows

Ray Luv



singer Tracey Thorn to grace Stateside radios with her rare English soul. From her guest vocals with Massive Attack to her Miracles cover on the *Batman Forever* soundtrack, Thorn's voice is untouchable—which is exactly how **SPEECH** sounds on his version of "Like Marvin Said" (Like Marvin Said) "What's Goin' On" (Motown), from *Inner City Blues: The Music of Marvin Gaye*. With his burnished voice, Speech is cooled-out but still burning.

PHOTO BY TIM ALLEN/REX



Left to right: Louie Marrero, Angel Ramirez Jr., Robert Vargas, David Davilla, Hans Giraldo

Barrio Boyzz How We Roll EMI Records

For several years, the Barrio Boyzz have been slow-jamming most often in the mother tongue—they've got a slew of albums on *español* behind them. But with their new collection, *How We Roll*, the Boyzz ask, in English, "Just what is the Latin flava?"

Whatever it is, it's a mix about as on time as any Boyzz II Men or Jodeci sugar-sweet harmony. There's a cover of Santa Esmeralda's "You're My Everything," which works in a Spanish chorus that mostly sounds like something the Boyzz needed to get out of their systems. But the title track is somehow more essential: It takes an old Run-DMC sample, adds a dose of old-school Latin hip hop flow, and asks, "Have you ever been aroused / Beyond control?" Well, yes, you answer, as a backward guitar riff is sampled to set off the simple pleasure of "Flava Honey," where the body is celebrated as a temple for the taste buds.

There's even a Tony Toni Toné-like voice blend on "Leave the Lights On," a freaky encounter seemingly lit by a gentle strobe and propelled by a two-note synth howl that sounds like a certain Mothership descending. Fat Joe is in the house briefly, kicking much barrio attitude on "I Get Lifted," as Full Force and Daryl Simmons shore up the production team.

How We Roll makes it very clear that the Boyzz' aesthetic is mainly wall-of-emotion harmonizing—sticky-spicy concoctions like last year's "Wherever You Are" collaboration with Selena (featured on her posthumously released *Dreaming of You*). But while these guys are surely hombre enough to compete with Philly's hometown heroes, the Barrio Boyzz could do a little more Spanish script flipping to make the distinction clearer—and give their own flava a more full-bodied taste.

Ed Morales



Sweet Honey in the Rock Earth, Wind & Fire Sacred Ground

On the new *Sacred Ground*, Sweet Honey in the Rock stick to their 22-year-old formula: a mix of classic spirituals and original compositions. "We Are" and "Mystic Oceans"—a wordless "voice instrumental"—are flawless. And poet Sonia Sanchez joins the quintet to rally for a more egalitarian future in the rawer "I Have Come Into the City."

Some of the cuts go on for too long. But brilliant songs—like the haunting "Would You Harbor Me," which finds the women wondering who will love refugees and AIDS survivors—predominate on the group's stirring 13th album. Sweet Honey in the Rock still sound sweet, rich, and so, so strong.

Asaf Solomon

PURE SOUL



IN STORES OCTOBER 3

Featuring the hit singles "WE MUST BE IN LOVE" (The Wedding Song) and "I WANT YOU BACK" (Produced by Teddy Riley).

Also includes tracks produced by Raphael Saadiq and Foster & McElroy.



© 1995 EMI Records Inc. All Rights Reserved.

"a party with dirty sex in the living room, filthy funk on the stereo, dodgy stimulants on the stairwell, the same freaky dancing carrying on from the night before."

—the face

"[It's great...] should remind the world that shaun ryder is a man with a sense of humor and a sense of style. It's witty, wickedly groovy, psychotic, profane, funky and downright hilarious...It's brilliant. moving even. There isn't a single dud track on it... 10/10."

— new musical express



former happy monday shaun ryder is back with a new band and the number one album in britain touring america november/december 1995



Radioactive On-Line: <http://radioactive.net>

You just got the name of your favorite band shaved on your head.

Too bad your barber can't spell.



Ben Watts

Life is Harsh. Your Tequila Shouldn't Be.

Sauza Commemorative and Vibe present the Life is Harsh contest

1 Grand Prize Winner

will receive 4 tickets to an urban music concert in their hometown.

4 Second Prize Winners

will receive VIBE T-shirts.

10 Third Prize Winners

will receive a limited edition Sauza T-shirt.

Here's How to Win

Send us a photo with a caption OR in 50 words or less tell us why Life Is Harsh. Send your name and address to

Life is Harsh Contest
c/o Vibe Magazine
205 Lexington Ave
New York, NY 10016



THE SMOOTHER, ONE-AGED TEQUILA

All entries must be received by December 31, 1995. Entries will not be returned and may be used for promotional purposes. You must be 21 or older to enter.

PHOTO BY JEFFREY SCALER



Although it's been seven years since Tracy Chapman lodged her bluesy folk (often labeled "black alternative") sound onto the pop charts, black radio is no friendlier to her today than it was back then. Despite this slight, Chapman has forged a solid career, as her Grammy Award and triple-platinum sales will attest. With her fourth release, *New Beginning*, she continues to explore the acoustic-guitar-grounded compositions that have always been her forte. Here, however, her once timid alto is more refined, and she delivers her material in a softer, slightly higher pitch than she is usually known for—and it works.

"Heaven's Here on Earth" and "Smoke and Ashes" are beautifully arranged and strike a perfect balance between Chapman's bitter guitar chords and honkylike voice. She flips the formula a bit on the title track, in which a jazzy, almost reggae-tinged bass line gives her the freedom to play with the song's upbeat tempo and harmonies.

Lyrical, she appears to be having more fun with this material too. Between wailing electric guitar licks on the straight-ahead blues "Give Me One Reason," Chapman warns, "I don't want no one to squeeze me, they might take away my life / I just want someone to hold me and rock me through the night." Amen, Tracy.

Rock as she might, it's always been her naked ballads that enrapture most Chapman purists—and *New Beginning* doesn't disappoint. The soothing chorus of "I'm Ready" caresses the listener, while the feathery strings of "The Promise" are as sensual as a lover's breath in your ear. Whether it's a mid-tempo number or one with a beat that barely measures a pulse, Tracy Chapman still knows the power of popular music's delicate essence.

Omoronke Idowu

Tracy Chapman

Elektra

New Beginning

PHOTO BY JAMES WOODS/ILL



Veronica

V...As in Veronica
Mercury

Veronica steps out with her engaging and sensual debut, *V...As in Veronica*. With her head held high and a steady strut, Veronica's voice breathes a strength, depth, and sexiness that, at times, can't help but remind you of Stephanie Mills. The gentle ballad "Ova & Ova" comes at you with a flow so sweet it makes you close your eyes and feel all she has to offer, while the upbeat "Really Don't Miss You" opens those eyes back up and hits that spot that definitely keeps your head bobbin'. Stepping away from the songs about sex, "Sista" pours out a mellow beat as Veronica croons a sympathetic and heartfelt promise of support for her fellow sistas.

Dyani Sexton



Mystikal

Mystikal

Jive

If Mystikal's self-titled debut is an example, New Orleans has also fallen victim to the G-funk beast that seems to be conquering everything outside of the East Coast's concrete confines. But there's an interesting twist to this gangsta: Fancying himself "the man with two tongues," he manages to rhyme "beotch" and "Oshkosh B'Gosh" in a Snoopy-like moment before jumping into a Busta Rhymesian tirade on "Y'all Ain't Ready Yet." On "Beware" and "Not That Nigga," he showcases pop culture referencing tendencies that rival only Das EFX's. The Big Easy's Mystikal is definitely worth a listen if you're anxious for a hyper gangsta who sounds like he has way too much sugar in his diet.

kris ex



Jackie Mittoo

Heartbeat

Tribute to Jackie Mittoo

"What is this?" people always ask when the keyboard stylings of Jackie Mittoo blast from my system. That's usually followed by "This shit is dope!" or "Sounds like Jamaican roller-rink music." Mr. Mittoo is not without his detractors, but then neither was Mozart. If he recorded a few cheese-esque sides over his 30-year career, well, he earned the right. But those who mistake Mittoo for Muzak need to have their ear holes checked.

Donat Roy "Jackie" Mittoo's credits read like a time capsule of Jamaican music. From 1963 through the '70s (he died in 1990), Mittoo was the musical director of the legendary Studio One, writing, arranging, and playing organ on thousands of recordings. He was a founding member of the Skatalites, Soul Vendors, and Sound Dimension. He also developed a following in Canada, where he recorded, toured, and jammed with Quincy Jones, Oscar Peterson, and Paul Shaffer, kindred spirits all.

Heartbeat's double CD is as eccentric and fervid as Mittoo's own key work. Hardly a greatest hits collection, *Tribute* seeks instead to capture Mittoo's fearlessly experimental soul. There are rock-steady standards ("Gold Mine") and ska stompers ("Got My Boogaloo"), but the essence of Mittoo's art comes through on peculiar masterpieces like "Nature Boy," in which Count Ossie pounds a foundation of Nyabingi! percussion under Mittoo's sensitive interpretation of Sinatra's "It Was a Very Good Year."

Throughout the 31 tracks on *Tribute*, Mittoo works his Hammond B-3 organ within an inch of its life, getting all sorts of sounds in the process—from black steel in the hour of chaos to a nearly imperceptible tremble that fills a song with tension. Mittoo's respect for the Stax sound is clear in cuts like "Memphis Groove," but to call him reggae's Booker T. is to diminish his accomplishment. Whether covering Seals & Croft or co-writing Leroy Sibley's ur-bass lines, Mittoo was not an imitator, but a genuine creator.

Rob Kenner

5 ALBUMS, 13 SINGLES, OVER 2.5 MILLION IN SALES, THE ONE AND ONLY BREED



THE BEST OF BREED

In Stores Now!

Features Current Singles "Well Alright"/"Real MC"

THIS IS HOW HE DID IT



P.C. BREED & D.C.



20 BELOW



THE NEW BREED



P.O. BREED



MC BREED



BIG BALLER

WIMP Records • Distributed by Island Records • Tel. (800) 724-6777 • Fax (800) 724-6777 • Tel. (770) 418-1014 • Tel. (770) 418-1014 • Fax (770) 418-1014 • E-mail: WIMP@WIMP.COM

stereo cd rom

A FULL LENGTH MUSIC ALBUM

A MULTIMEDIA VISUAL EXPLOSION

enhanced cd is a new format which combines a full length album of music, playable in your home stereo, with a bonus multimedia track for your cd rom drive on just one disk.

groove active

is a compilation of Jazz Hip Hop and urban groove. The multimedia track takes the viewer on a urban underground journey. This full screen visual experience includes concert footage, artist, imagine, graffiti art, spoken word, fashion and imagery from Jazz and Hip Hop scenes the world over.

in stores nov.one



ONE COMPACT DISC

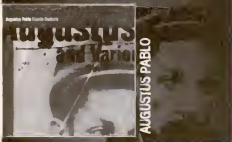
50% MUSIC / 50% INTERACTIVE / 100% FUNNY
THE FUTURE OF MUSIC IS ENHANCED CD
PLAYABLE ON YOUR HOME STEREO AND MAC OS PC
<http://www.am-records.com>



ISLAND JAMAICA CLASSICS

the best in reggae

REINTRODUCING SOME OF THE FINEST REGGAE MUSIC FROM THE PAST 20 YEARS. INCLUDES PREVIOUSLY UNRELEASED CLASSIC CUTS AND NEW DUB VERSIONS WITH A FRESH FLAVOR.



PHOTOS BY CHRISTINE ALCONO



Terry Ellis

EastWest Southern Gal

En Vogue have been the dominant female R&B group of this decade, and since debuting in 1990 with *Born to Sing*, they've got a wall full of platinum plaques to prove it. Over the years, though, their no-leader/harmonizing-girl-group formation has left many wondering if the foursome are individually talented or simply a quartet of Jane Does with great chemistry. Everyone knows they're all unquestionably attractive—some may even recall their appearances on *Roc*. But most folks still identify them as the fine one with the baby, the one with the pouty face, the short, thicker one, and the thin, pretty one.

So which funky diva is Terry Ellis? Her solo debut, *Southern Gal*, faces a peculiar problem. She's unknown on her own, yet subject to En Vogue-style expectations.

For the record, Ellis is the thin, pretty one. But it's insulting to reduce her to a mere physical description now that we have her music to go on. "Back Down Memory Lane" playfully provides family info and touches on her college years at Prairie View A&M, while the corny "Southern Girl Interlude" outro gives Ellis a parting chance to "represent" her countrified Texas upbringing. "She's a Lady" and "Sista Sista," while not exactly masterful tunes, demonstrate Ellis's pride and understanding of womanhood.

"It Ain't Over" and "Where Ever You Are" might put you to sleep—for better or worse—but *Southern Gal* doesn't really go wrong anywhere. The variety of instrumental backings, courtesy of En Vogue masterminds McElroy and Foster, is a pleasant surprise. Despite spots of generic material, which can be expected of most any solo debut, Ellis shows her willingness to go it alone. She proves that her voice, not just the En Vogue sound, is worth listening to.

OJ Lima

NIGHT BEAT

A CLUB LIST

Detroit:

Feeling like you've left a definite impression in this life? Then *Legends* is for you. It boasts a four-story walkup: Level one's the game room, the main dance floor is on level two, level three's a sports bar, and an exclusive VIP section's on level four. Their memorable "Dress to Sweat" (meaning wear what you like) Thursday nights provides an eclectic mix of house and rap music to shake that booty to while you snack on their \$3-6 munchies.... *Floods Bar* and *Grill* overflows with live jazz and R&B, and soul food seven days a week all for an entry fee of \$5.

Los Angeles:

I-N-I heart pours out with love when Big Short/DJwise comes to *The Martini Lounge* on reggae/dancehall Monday nights.... Flex, described as the "hot spot" on the West Coast, has DJ Guz to provide Tuesday nights that hip hop and Wednesday's that get funky for your weekday.... Or come home Wednesday nights to DJ Jam, DJ Mark Luv, and DJ WhiteLightning, who are the heads of the household at *The Roxbury's Jamaica House*. It's a three-story hip hop, dancehall/reggae, and old-school haven for the city of angels' hippest crowd.... Every Friday DJ General Lee and Fred Loc provide the flavor needed in everyone's life by spinning their own specially squeezed brand of old-school funk and R&B at Juice.... Or max and lounge at L.A.'s universal poppa—*The Soul Daddy party at Checca* where all the club children are raised Saturday nights on rare soul grooves and funk music for only \$12.

BOSS

BY I.G. DESIGN

The club industry is a shifting one; always call ahead for current information.

Go in? Out? What to wear?

Look for Boss By I.G. Design at these fine retailers:

Detroit
Backroom/City Man
Man Green
Mr. Alan's
Sherry's

L.A.
Bad Boy Carson
BNQ Fashion, Colosio
Lee's, San Diego
Metropolis, Sherman Oaks

All Merry Go Round, Chess King and D'Jazz stores

FOX SATURDAY LATE NIGHT

After searching the nation for the most outrageous comics, we found eight who reside in the same place...



It's everything that's wrong with America...only funny!

MADTM TV

NEW SERIES!

TM & © 1997 FOX BROADCASTING COMPANY. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

SATURDAYS, 11PM/10

CENTRAL & MOUNTAIN



CHECK LOCAL LISTINGS FOR YOUR FOX STATION.

© Copyright 1997 Fox Broadcasting Company

CALL THE

VIBE LINE 1-718-622-VIBE

Have you ever previewed new music on your telephone?

YOU[®] WILL

Now you can listen to any of the music selections listed below. Just enter the four digit code of the song you'd like to hear. AT&T is proud to sponsor the Vibe Line.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 7818 Silk
Silk
Elektra | 7825 UB40
Best Of Vol. I & II
Virgin |
| 7817 AZ
Doe Or Die
EMI | 7826 MC Breed
The Best Of MC Breed
WRAP/ichiban |
| 7818 Jazzhole
And The Feeling Goes Round
Blue Moon Recordings | 7827 Terry Ellis
Southern Gal
EastWest |
| 7819 Various Artists
Groove Active
OM Records | 7828 Various Artists
Strictly The Best
VP Records |
| 7820 RBL Posse
Bluebird
In A Minute | 7829 KRS-One
KRS-One
Jive |
| 7821 Rudy Ray Moore
Greatest Hits
Right Stuff | 7830 Various Artists
10th Year Anniversary
Def Jam Music Group |
| 7822 Cypress Hill
Ill Temples Of Boom)
Ruffhouse/Columbia | 7831 Mic Geronimo
The Natural
Blunt Recordings |
| 7823 Simply Red
Life
EastWest | 7832 Intro
New Life
Atlantic |
| 7824 Funkmaster Flex
Funkmaster Flex Presents
The Mix Tape 60 Minutes
Of Funk Volume I
Loud | 7833 Various Artists
Acid Jazz Collection
Acid Jazz/Hollywood |

Just call **VIBE** Line (1-718-622-8423)

When prompted enter a four digit music code. You will be charged for a regular telephone call into the (718) Brooklyn, NY area. Problems? Questions? Call Music Access[®] at 718-398-2146.

Active from Nov. 13 to Jan. 5. A Touch Tone Telephone Required.

Music controls (use your phone keypad).

Press 3 = Fast Forward

Press 4 = Get louder

Press 5 = Get Softer

Press* = Exit music and bypass most prompts.



Al Green

Greatest Hits

The Right Stuff

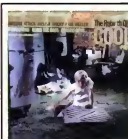


Contemporary R&B, for the most part, sucks. Untrained vocalists, dependency on sampled music, and the ungodly absence of soul (the spiritual vessel that makes black music the soundtrack for our America) has rendered it shallow. And that's probably why I've been fiending' for the numerous recent '60s and '70s soul/R&B reissues—Lawd knows we need some uplifting sentiments at a time when some performers have reduced our peeps to "niggas" and "bitches."

Enter Al Green, one of the baddest soul stirrers of all time, with a rerelease of his *Greatest Hits* (with five bonus tracks not on the original album). These 15 body-soothing jams are pure butter. Mostly sensual love songs he sculpted with Hi Records president/producer Willie Mitchell, the tunes feature tight guitar and drum licks meshed beautifully with an overdubbed string section, funk-ed-up organs, and choirlike backup vocals. The Hi rhythm section worked magic around Green's vulnerable, teary-eyed persona.

"Let's Stay Together," Green's signature song and his biggest hit, is the foundation of the edifice that became his church of love. Green's voice testifies, prophesies, moans, grunts, and downright screams for love the way some of my relatives shout for Jesus. The bluesy "Tired of Being Alone," Green's first gold single from 1971, is my personal favorite because it reminds me of southern folks just kickin' it on the back porch, harmonizing and spilling their guts to anyone who will listen. Songs like "Belle" (1977), "Full of Fire" (1975), and the supercharged spirituality of 1972's "Love and Happiness" only boost Green's claim to the title of Soul Man of the '70s.

My only beef with this *Greatest Hits* is that it teases. A boxed set (which is rumored to be in the works) with a detailed biography is a must if listeners are to truly appreciate the brilliance of Al Green. *Kevin Powell*



'Rebirth of Cool 3'

Various Artists

4th & Broadway/Island

You know that 4 a.m., after-the-party vibe? When everyone is still buzzed, the lights are on, the DJ is packing up his crates, and nobody wants to go home? Well, that's the perfect time to go over to a friend's house, lounge, and chill out with *Rebirth of Cool 3*. This compilation of mostly European artists (including Portishead, Jhelisa, and Coldcut) and mostly prereleased recordings—like the Beastie Boys' "Get It Together," featuring Q-Tip—is a mellow, trip-hop, wait-for-the-sunrise experience. Listening to Kruder & Dorfmeister's "Deep Shit Pt. 1 & Pt. 2," you can't help but slow down. *Emil Wilbekin*

From ABC to Ph.D. to j.o.b.

At AT&T, we believe in making connections that will last a lifetime, whether it means improving grade school skills or helping to educate one-fifth of the nation's minority Ph.D.s in electrical engineering.

So, from our support of the *National Urban Coalition* program that enhances math and science learning for elementary kids, to our 20-year-old AT&T Bell Labs Minority Ph.D. Fellowship Programs, to our search to hire and do business with members of the community we serve, AT&T is with you, staying connected for life.

©1993 AT&T



THE

VIBE

SPOT

From coast to coast, no one throws a party like VIBE. Peep the pictures from our latest events



1. All the true players throw their hands in the air when, the Big Poppa, Notorious B.I.G. takes the mike. Coors Light Show, NYC.
2. Don't sleep... DJ Red Alert and Marly Marl are still representin'. The Coors Light Show, NYC.
3. Always in the middle of



a phat jam, Grandma Funk takes a break to pose with the beautiful finalists of Seagram's Electrifying Ladies contest. The Seagram's G'n event at Ibis Supper Club, NYC.
4. The lovely Kym, Mitzel and Sue join Big Shoes, "House" Mike and Opra T. of 106Jamz/V103 Chicago, in giving the Absolut event at Inta's two thumbs up.
5. An Absolut VIBE is in the house when VIBE's Kenard Gibbs, Midwest Sales Manager, John Rollins, Publisher and Keith T. Clinckales, President/CEO get together with Christian Kostrau, House of Seagram's and Joe LaCalamita, Union Liquor Company. The Absolut event at Inta's, Chicago.



PHOTOGRAPHERS: NY: KOI SOJER/SHAPIN U PHOTOS • CHICAGO: MICHELLE RICHMOND
CATERER: CHICAGO: CHEF TANIA PRODUCTIONS & CATERING
MUSIC: DJ JULIAN

THE DETAILS

VIBE Fashion: "Cold Chillin' "

Page 108: Suga: White flight suit \$590 by Giorgio Armani NEVE available at Giorgio Armani boutiques, N.Y.C., Boston, and Beverly Hills; Pro-Frame goggles \$102 by Oakley available at specialty sporting-goods stores nationwide.

Page 109: Q-Tip: Indy Interchange's coat \$185 and men's suspender jean \$105, both by Columbia Sportswear (for more information, call 800-MA BOYLE); brown fleece hooded pullover \$85 by Phat Farm available at Phat Farm, N.Y.C., and Union, L.A.

Page 110-111, top: Klepto: Maize-and-blue down parka \$150 and matching racing bib \$150, both by Helly Hansen available at Dr. Jay's, N.Y.C., and Up Against the Wall, Washington, D.C.; polar-fleece lining with zipper \$50 by Boss available at Merry Go Round, N.Y.C., and Millers Outpost, L.A.; black hat by Adidas (for more information, call 800-966-7677); goggles by Mustang available at Patricia Field, N.Y.C. Larceny: Navy nylon hooded coat \$45 by Nautica available at Nautica, N.Y.C., and Newport Beach, Calif.; Futur ski goggles \$92.50 by Bollé (for more information, call 303-321-4300). Trife: Navy nylon jacket \$225, green polar fleece lining \$81, and navy fleece sweatshirt \$86, all by Nautica available at Nautica, N.Y.C., and Newport Beach, Calif.; Red silk down jacket \$155 and black stretch turtleneck \$375, both by Isaac Mizrahi available at Bergdorf Goodman, N.Y.C., and Nieman Marcus, Beverly Hills.

Page 110-111, bottom: Bugsy: Blue quilted down coat \$425 and blue polar fleece T-neck lining \$145, both by DKNY for Donna Karan available at Macy's and Bloomingdales nationwide; Pro-Frame goggles \$102 by Oakley available at specialty sporting-goods stores nationwide. Capone: Navy nylon pullover \$225 by Giorgio Armani NEVE available at Giorgio Armani boutiques, N.Y.C., Boston, and Beverly Hills; Chrono F.O. ski goggles \$115 by Bollé. Nino: Black-and-blue summit suit \$760 by The North Face available at The North Face Store, San Francisco, and Paragon, N.Y.C.; Futur ski goggles \$92.50 by Bollé. Little Caesar: Silver reflective parka \$310, navy overalls \$315, and white sweater \$290, all by Giorgio Armani NEVE available at Giorgio Armani boutiques, N.Y.C., Boston, and Beverly Hills; Pro-Frame goggles \$102 by Oakley available at specialty sporting-goods stores nationwide. Check: Blue-and-black quilted coat approximately \$280 by Bear available at Paragon, N.Y.C., and Tony's Sports, Chicago; goggles by Bollé; headband by Bear available at Paragon, N.Y.C., and Tony's Sports, Chicago.

Page 112: Skoob: Hooded "1963" sweatshirt \$96 and Norpole "Dates" jacket \$190, both by PNB Nation available at Union, N.Y.C., and George's Department Stores, L.A.; headband by Bear available at Paragon, N.Y.C., and Tony's Sports, Chicago. Drazz: Fleece hooded sweatshirt \$85 by Phat Farm available at Phat Farm, N.Y.C., and Union, L.A.; Chrono F.O. ski goggles \$115 by Bollé.

Page 113: Kool Keith: Yellow, blue, and white coat \$300, polar-fleece scuba jacket \$130, and ski pant \$150, all by Mecca U.S.A. available at Macy's, N.Y.C., and Fred Segal, L.A.; ski cap by Kangol available at Arnold Hatters, N.Y.C., and Robley Hats, Atlanta; goggles by Mustang available at Patricia Field, N.Y.C.

VIBE Style: "Objects of Desire"

Page 118: Smoky quartz silver ring \$543 and Cuban link silver bracelet \$487, both by Jacqueline Raben available at Ron Herman, L.A., Ecco, Houston, and Barney's New York, N.Y.C.

Page 119: Fleece headband \$200 and fleece hoodie \$144, both by Karl Kani available at Macy's East Coast, and Belks nationwide.

Page 120: Single-breasted suit \$395, wool vest \$100, cotton dress shirt \$48, and necktie, all by Tommy Hilfinger available at better department and specialty stores nationwide.

Page 121: Umbra No. 106 sunglasses \$350 by Kata available at Dan Deutsch Optical Outlook, L.A., Morgenthal Frederines, N.Y.C., and Optical Spectrum, Fort Lauderdale.

Page 122: Gore-Tex boot by Bear available at Athletes Foot nationwide, and David Z, N.Y.C.

Page 123: Tram leather trench coat \$1,900 by Industria available at the Industria store, N.Y.C.; furgora Jennifer hat \$65 by Kangol available at Arnold Hatters, N.Y.C.

VIBE® magazine (ISSN 1070-4701) is published monthly (except for combined December/January and June/July issues) by Time Publishing Ventures, Inc., Time & Life Bldg., Rockefeller Ctr., New York, NY 10020-1393. Robert L. Miller, Chairman & President; Barbara Kaczynski, Treasurer; Harry M. Johnston, Secretary. Second-class postage paid at New York, NY, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to VIBE magazine, Box 50500, Boulder, CO 80522-0500. Regular subscription rate is \$11.95 per year. Foreign subscription rates are: Canada \$30.00; all other countries \$50.00 payable in advance in U.S. funds. GST# R2360309, Vol. 3, No. 10. Copyright © 1995 Time Publishing Ventures, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this magazine may be copied or reproduced without permission from VIBE. Subscription requests, address changes, and adjustments should be directed to VIBE, Box 9980, Boulder, CO 80522-9980, or call 800-477-3399. Please print name and address clearly. VIBE cannot be responsible for unsolicited materials. VIBE is a trademark of Time Publishing Ventures, Inc.

IF THEY'RE SO EAGER **TO CONTROL**
HIP HOP MUSIC, THEY SHOULD
CALL THE BOX AND ORDER
THEIR OWN DAMN VIDEOS.



The BOX believes in the freedom of choice. We give you the power to choose the videos you want to see. More new artists. More videos you won't find anywhere else. Unfiltered and unaltered.

Which is why you've broken more new artists on the BOX than anywhere else.

If you don't get the BOX on your TV, call your local cable company over and over and over again until they are so sick of hearing from you they give in.

MUSIC TELEVISION YOU CONTROL®



Technics

SL1200-MKII

The choice of DJ's, Remixers, and Radio Stations Worldwide

FREE 88-Page Mail Order Catalog
Call: 1-800-945-9300
 Mail Order Name: M-F 8am - 5pm, Sat 7am - 5pm, Sun 9-5 PST
 or visit our Superstore in Southern California
 13110 Magnolia Street
 Garden Grove, Calif. (714) 530-6760
 1 mile north of the 2nd freeway, near Disneyland™

PRO SOUND & STAGE LIGHTING
 Our 20th Year!

Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation

1. Publication Title: VIBE 2. Publication No.: 011-607 3. Filing Date: 5/29/95 4. Issue Frequency: Monthly except for combined December/January and June/July issues 5. No. of Issues Published Annually: 10 6. Annual Subscription Price: \$11.95 7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication: Time Publishing Ventures, Inc., Time & Life Building, Rockefeller Center, New York, NY 10020-1393 8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher: VIBE, 205 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10016 9. Full Name and Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor: Publisher: John Rollins, VIBE, 205 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10016. Editor: Alan Light, VIBE, 205 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10016. Managing Editor: Joe Angelo, VIBE, 205 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10016 10. Owner: "VIBE is published by Vibe Magazine Partners, the partners of which are Kenyetta Inc., Deed Ventures Inc., and Vibe Holdings Inc. Vibe Holdings Inc. is a wholly owned subsidiary of Time Publishing Ventures, Inc., which is a wholly owned subsidiary of Time Inc. Ventures and an indirect wholly-owned subsidiary of Time Inc., 1271 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020, which is a wholly owned subsidiary of Time Warner Inc., 75 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, NY 10019. To the best knowledge of Time Warner Inc., the names and addresses of stockholders owning 1% or more of the publicly traded stock of Time Warner Inc. (as of 6/30/95, unless otherwise indicated) are as follows: Alliance Capital Management L.P., 1345 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY; The Capital Group Inc., 333 South Hope Street, Los Angeles, CA; CDE & Co., P.O. Box 20, Bowling Green Station, New York, NY (as of 6/30/95); Chancellor Capital Management, 1160 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY; Fidelity Management & Research Co., 1 Federal Street, Boston, MA; Fidelity Trust Company International, 2 World Trade Center, New York, NY; GAMCO Investors, Inc., 1 Corporate Center at Rye, Rye, NY; The Henry Louis Foundation, Inc., 111 West 50th Street, New York, NY; Newburger & Bernman Pension Management, 605 Third Avenue, New York, NY; Regents of the University of California, 3001 Laszelle Drive, 17th Floor, Oakland, CA; The Siegrans Company Ltd., 1430 Peel Street, Montreal, Quebec, Canada (as of 1-1-94); SICR & Co., c/o Bankers Trust Company, P.O. Box 39, Church Street Station, New York, NY; TDA-CREF Investment Management Inc., 730 Third Avenue, New York, NY; Trustees Investment Management Co., 1 Tower Square, Hartford, CT; Wells Fargo Mutual Investment Advisors, 45 Fenwood Street, San Francisco, CA; Time Warner Inc. Series D Convertible Preferred Stock (as of 6/30/95): Houston Industries Incorporated 4000 West Loop, Houston, TX 77027; Time Warner Inc. Series D Convertible Preferred Stock (as of 6/30/95): TOUCHN Corporation 5-1, Kita-Aoyama 2-Chome, Minato-Ku Tokyo 107-771, Japan. To the best knowledge of Time Warner Inc. and August 31, 1994, December 31, 1994, and 1995, the names and addresses of stockholders owning 1% or more of the debt securities of Time Warner Inc. "Believed to be held for the account of one or more security holders 13. Publication Name: VIBE 14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below: August 1995

15. Extent and Nature of Circulation	Avg. No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	Actual No. Copies of Issue Published Nearest Filing Date
a. Total No. Copies (Net Press Run)	460,604	502,163
b. Paid and/or Requested Circulation		
1. Sales Through Dealers (Not Mailed)	99,250	126,599
2. Paid or Requested Mail Sales	202,405	257,893
c. Total Paid and/or Requested Circ.	301,705	384,492
d. Free Distribution by Mail	5,027	5,724
e. Free Distribution Outside the Mail	0	0
f. Total Free Distribution	5,027	5,724
g. Total Distribution	306,732	390,216
h. Copies Not Distributed		
1. Office Use, Leftovers, Spoiled	13,472	8,617
2. Return From News Agents	136,092	153,853
j. Total	456,296	552,686
k. % Paid and/or Requested Circ.	66.3%	66.5%

16. This Statement of Ownership will be printed in the December/January issue 17. Keith T. Onizcalcas, President and CEO

CLASSIFIED

VIBE MAGAZINE DEC/JAN 1995

SINGLES

Meet Latin American Ladies thru correspondence! Photos, tours & videos. Free photo brochure! TLC; Box 92494-V; Houston, TX 77292-9994 (713) 896-2424

MEET WOMEN WORLDWIDE. FREE 32-page photo catalog. Correspondence service since 1974. Cherry Blossoms, 1907 Rainbow Ridge, Kapahu, Hawaii 96735 (408) 980-7488

BEAUTIFUL GIRLS LIVING IN SOUTH AMERICA and the CARIBBEAN want Romance / Friend ship. Free 66-page color catalog. LatinEuro Intro, 444 Brickell Bay VR, Miami, FL 33131 (1-305) 858-7716, 2 hrs. Ladies welcome to join. (NO CORRECTIONAL!)

LONELY? MEET SOMEONE SPECIAL TONIGHT. All lifestyles, all areas, 1-900-680-6770 ext 610 \$2.95 min. 18+ TPLPV NY

TELEPHONE ENTERTAINMENT

WE'RE HOT & WILD and we're waiting to talk to you about anything! NO HOLDS BARRED! Live 24 hrs! 1-900-344-0940 Ext. 5105 \$3.99/min., 18+

HOT, HORNY, BEAUTIFUL WOMEN
 Are waiting to talk with you
LIVE!
1-900-868-6660
 \$3.00 per min. 18+ Cal anytime

26¢ MIN!!!
 AMATEUR Porn Stars
1-011-592-593-476
 PERVERTED PLEASURES
1-011-972-565-41-024

CHEAP THRILLS!
 IT'S A WILD LIVE PARTY!
 TALK - LISTEN - GET LUCKY
1-809-474-6171

GAY! GAY! GAY!
 #1 RATED GAY CRUISE SYSTEM
 Live Group Action - 1 min 1-Voice Mail - Database
1-800-474-7546
 ONLY VOICE LINE US CARRIERS APPLY. 18+

VIBE CLASSIFIED

FOR ADVERTISING INFORMATION CALL ANN ROCCAFORTE AT 312.321.7912

TELEPHONE ENTERTAINMENT

Sizzling Hot! XXX Live!
 Horny Babes! 011-592-586-146
 Ladies Int! 011-592-586-147
 Live Dates: 011-592-586-129
 NOW LIVE! (SEE RESPONSE LIST) - PHONE GROUPS - 24 HRS

WILD LIVE TALK!
 Gorgeous Babes Want You!
011-592-595-920
 24 HRS. 18+ 24 HRS.

MAN2MAN
 The Ultimate Gay Connection!
011-592-595-948
 24 HRS. 18+ 24 HRS.

CHEAP & NASTY
 Backdoor Babes
 011-592-597-667
 Ultra Hardcore
 011-592-597-721
 24 HRS. 18+ 24 HRS.

GUYS GUYS
 at the
BOYS CLUB
 1-809-474-6093
 24 HRS. 18+ 24 HRS.

STRICTLY ADULTS!
 (VERY EXCITING)
1-800-652-H.O.T.T.
1-900-435-3554
 24 HRS. 18+ 24 HRS.

Wild Adult Party!
 Cruise for XXX Ladies
 Then Connect... LIVE!
 Leave a RETRIEVE HOT MESSAGE!
1-809-474-7547
 18+ - 24 HRS. 18+ 24 HRS.

VIBE MAGAZINE CLASSIFIED DEC/JAN 1995

VIBE MAGAZINE CLASSIFIED
 Classified Rates: 1995: \$50 per line, 3 lines minimum. \$485 per inch, 1 inch minimum. Call for Telephone Entertainment rates. Payment Must Accompany All Orders. February Issue Deadline is November 24, 1995. To Advertise, call (312) 321-7952.

BOOKS

BOOKS ALL AFRICAN AMERICANS MUST READ! Complete line of books and videos. Youth subjects include academic achievement, discipline, motivation, self-esteem, history and more. Adult subjects include parenting, relationships, community empowerment, entrepreneurship and more. Call (800) 550-1991 for free catalog African American Images, 1909 W. 95th Street, DEM 2, Chicago, IL 60643.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

ALASKA EMPLOYMENT Fishing Industry. Earn up to \$3,000-\$6,000+ per month. No experience necessary. Male/Female. Age 18-70. Call: (206) 545-9155 ext. A9134

GENERATE \$200,000 QUICKLY & EASILY! For a starter kit send \$9.95 chkr or M/O to TTN PO Box 97 Apt V4, Chino Valley, AZ 86313

CLUBS

KHRISST PRESENTS a gay urban dance party every Wed. Clubhouse Wednesdays NYC Hip-Hop, House, R&B, Tribal, Reggae, Rap. DJ's Frankie Paradise & Unknown. For info call 212 768 8820

EDUCATION

CLERICAL PAPER ASSISTANCE HOT LINE
 SAVING UP TO 20% OFF RESEARCH PAPERS. OR CALL TOLL FREE 800-351-0222
 Research Assistance, Inc. (310) 477-8258
 11322 Lash Ave., # 205 TV, Los Angeles, CA 90025

GEAR

GANGSTA SPECS

Beat The Rap
 One size fits all. Color black. Price \$14.95
 Rock n Roll Optics
 2304 18th Ave. Dept. San Francisco 94116
 The Original Urban Sunglasses



1-800-868-8463
 Latest Info on Wu Tang
 T-Shirts, Temp Tattoos,
 Demos, etc.

GEAR

EXCLUSIVE AFRICAN VEST
MAKE A BOLD CULTURAL STATEMENT!



To order: specify HIS or HERS
 IK-A&B: M/L/XL \$65.00
 IK-A&B: 2X \$69.00
 (add \$3.70 shipping / handling)

100% COTTON. ACETATE LINING. DRY CLEAN. ADJUSTABLE.

Send to: **ROYALS OF AFRICA INC.**
 168 RESERVOIR AVE., PROVIDENCE, RI 02907
 Credit Card Orders Call (401) 785-1377 Sorry, No C.O.D.
 Money Order, Cheques Accepted.

BLACK PLAYING CARDS! African American Face. Kente Cloth Backs, \$3.50/deck. Ship ping included. Order by November 30, get free Kente pen. Free Catalog, Blacks Factor Inc., PO Box 2882, Detroit, MI 48231. Now available at TARGET, K&N & Thrift drug stores.

REPLICA SWISS WATCHES Lowest! 18KT Goldpl! 2Y Warr! Br & Chrono-graphs, Divers, others! PH(770) 682-0606, TX (770) 682-1700

SCHOOLS

HEAR THE FUTURE



BE A RECORDING ENGINEER

Learn Recording and Mixing, Signal Processing, MIDI, Digital Audio and more. Immerse at a top NY studio and benefit from intensive job placement assistance. You can start your career in less than 12 weeks!

800-544-2501
 NY, NJ, CONN 212-777-8550
 Lic. by NY State Education Dept. 155-01-0022 Required
 App. for Vert. Training / Financial Aid if Eligible
Institute of Audio Research
 64 University Place, Greenwich Village, New York, NY 10003

MUSIC SERVICES

RELEASE YOUR OWN CDS
 300 CDs and 300 Cassettes
 only \$2,190
 with \$1000 return

• FREE Graphic Design • Ready to 3 Weeks
 • Major Label Quality • No-Frills Print Guarantee
 Call today for your FREE, 1995 Fall color sampling
1-800-468-9353
 24 HOURS TOLL FREE
 609-663-1930 609-681-3028

DISC MAKERS

MAKE MILLIONS! Learn the recording, music publishing, copy rights and starting a record company. Mystery House 1-900-772-8226 \$1.98 min 18+

PSYCHIC

LIVE PSYCHIC 24 HOURS! Accurate! Amazing 99% repeat clientele! 1-900-362-8888 Fin @ .995 \$3.99/min, 18+ TTY 1-900-3903

AUDREY FINN, INSIGHTER. Counselor, Advisor and Insider Call (803) 666-8390

RECORDS, TAPES, CD'S

THE ULTIMATE MIXED TAPES Features Slow Jam, Jazz & R&B Classics & Reggae Dancehall. All genuine, high bias. **KNOW'N AS THE BEST!** Send \$12 per tape, cash/MO/check to ES, PO Box 523025, Springfield, VA 22154 or send SASE for catalog or call 703-912-4918

CHICAGO STREET MIXES! Top DJ's spin non-stop hits. Free brochure call 1-602-863-2644 e-mail, CHITOWNDIS@aol.com

WEEKLY TOP 10 REGGAE COUNTDOWN STRAIGHT OUTTA JAMAICA! Sample tunes and hear how to order. 1 900 7REGGAE. \$1.47/min 18+/USA/TT only. Caribbean Trading Corp. Lawrence, KS.

NEWEST TAPES \$57.80 CD's \$51.80. Sega/Nintendo. Call (516) 733-0232 or send \$1.00 for catalog to Craig Communications, 901 Hempstead Tpke. Suite 106, East Meadow, NY 11554.

TOP DJ MIX TAPES all styles, rap, R&B, reggae, classics. DJ's Inc., Funkmaster Flex, Doo Wop, Red Alert, etc. Send two stamps to Tape World 38-11 Ditmars Blvd. Hixson, NY 11105 212-933-4977

SINGLES

BLONDE, MIXED ETHNIC & ASIAN GIRLS. Eager to meet men for good times. Local names and numbers 800-876-8471, 18+ \$2.99/min.

MANFINDER
LIVE! ALL-MALE 24HR.
 INSTANT
 PHONE CONTACTS!
 CALL NOW!
 800-288-8980



KWANZAA



HOLIDAY SPIRIT
A Kwanzaa greeting card.
Right: Kwanzaa founding father
Dr. Maulana Karenga, chairman of
black studies at California State
University at Long Beach

Even if midnight mass is more your speed, it's hard to deny that Dr. Maulana Karenga—the professor who invented Kwanzaa in 1966—has triumphed in his quest to bring African ritual into mainstream American life. And the weeklong harvest festival's inevitable commercialization only provides further proof of his success. Recent offerings include the



Cd Kwanzaa Music: A Celebration of Black Cultures in Song (Rounder), featuring James Brown, Aretha Franklin, and others; the book A Kwanzaa Fable by Eric V. Copage (William Morrow); and a cornucopia of Afrocentric greeting cards. With or without the customary feast, food for thought is just what the doctor ordered.

Henry Hample

LOGGER
Boots



DIESEL®

JEANS AND WORKWEAR



"A Diesel T-shirt? Just what I always wanted!"

THE FIRST SIGNS OF CHRONIC DEPRESSION ARE OFTEN EXTREMELY WELL DISGUISED.

©2001 Diesel S.p.A. Milano



ABSOLUT TRADITION.

ABSOLUT® VODKA. PRODUCT OF SWEDEN. 40 AND 50% ALC/VOL (80 AND 100 PROOF). 100% GRAIN NEUTRAL SPIRITS. ABSOLUT COUNTRY OF SWEDEN VODKA & LOGO, ABSOLUT, ABSOLUT BOTTLE DESIGN, AND ABSOLUT CALLIGRAPHY ARE TRADEMARKS OWNED BY V&S VIN & SPRIT AB. ©1995 V&S VIN & SPRIT AB. IMPORTED BY THE HOUSE OF SEAGRAM, NEW YORK, NY. PHOTOGRAPHED BY STEVE BERGMAN.

THOSE WHO APPRECIATE QUALITY ENJOY IT RESPONSIBLY.

Copyright © 1995 V&S Vin & Sprit AB



Number 48
IN A SERIES OF DIESEL "HOW TO" GUIDES TO
Successful living
for PEOPLE around the world HEALTH AND POWER
FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL
U.S. DIESEL TEAM: (800) 575-5221
CLOTHINGLINE APPAREL: 574-1563334